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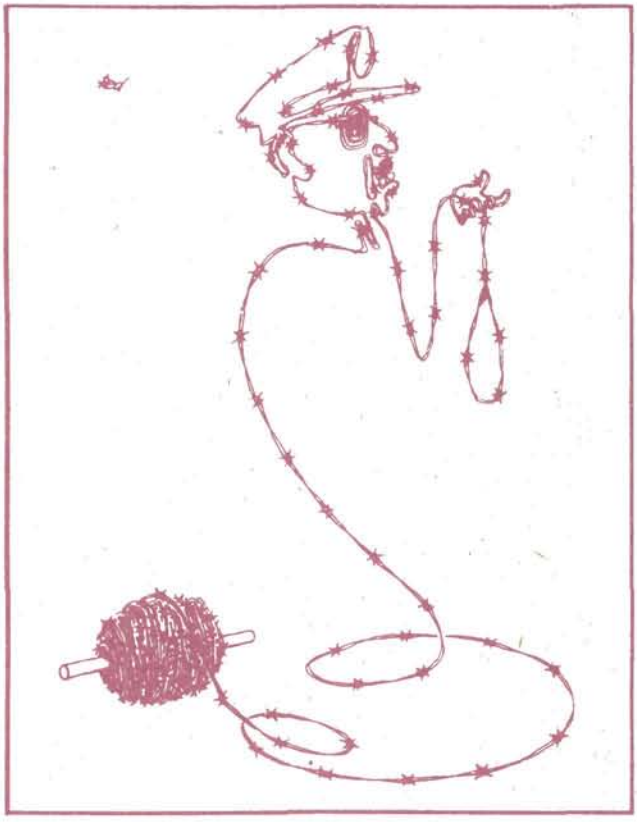
commonweal

DAVID RIESMAN
HUMAN RIGHTS: CONFLICTS AMONG OUR IDEALS



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NEWS & VIEWS

German Terrorism

They're looking for scapegoats in Germany for the terrorist fervor that has spread there, and one of those being seized upon is Heinrich Böll, author and Nobel laureate.

The Manchester Guardian Weekly noted that it was Böll who offered asylum to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who joined in the pro-Dubcek demonstrations for democratic socialism in Prague, who appealed to Tito on behalf of imprisoned intellectuals in Yugoslavia, who has spoken up for Soviet dissidents and signatories of Charter 77. A thoroughly good guy.

But, says the *Guardian*, all this seems forgotten, and Böll has become "the chief target of a witch hunt directed against alleged terrorist sympathizers."

It is not a new campaign. Böll has always been a popular target for right-wingers, but he became even more so after the kidnapping of German industry chief Hanns-Martin Schleyer in Cologne several weeks ago. He's been branded as a "spiritual instigator of terrorism."

The magazine *Quick* went so far as to say that "the Bölls are worse than Baader-Meinhof."

Böll concedes that some of his early statements may have been open to misinterpretation, but he maintains that he has never condoned violence and never supported the objectives of the notorious Baader-Meinhof gang.

Böll endured his criticism stoically, but after his son's house was raided by police, allegedly by mistake in the course of working on another case, he lashed back in a radio interview. He spoke of denunciation and a concerted smear campaign by the right-wing press against him and his family, and he accused the police of working hand in hand with that press. The police rejected the charges.

Böll's "crime," in the words of the *Guardian*'s correspondent, was in daring "to speak his mind and warn against hysteria in the hunt for alleged sympathizers with terrorism."

Unfortunately, the *Guardian* went on, the prevailing popular sentiment runs in the other direction. The broad masses, it said, are of a mind with Franz-Josef Strauss, chairman of the Christian Social Union: "One should leave those who claim to fight for the freedom of the people to the people. Police and justice authorities would then no longer have to deal with them."

Said the *Guardian*: It's a perfect prescription for Lynch-law rule.

That was in the *Guardian* for the week ending Oct. 16. Were its fears substantiated two days later when three West German terrorists, including Andreas Baader, died in their cells in a maximum-security prison a few hours after a crack West German commando force liberated that hijacked Lufthansa plane in Somalia?

West German authorities said the deaths were suicides, but of course there are skeptics. Script paralleled warnings too closely for doubts not to exist that the case may be other than as represented by authorities.

Straightening Us Out

Just in case anyone thinks that things have changed too much in the Church, we give you this entry from the new one-volume *Catholic Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert C. Broderick (Thomas Nelson, Inc.):

"*Liberals, Catholic*: . . . Liberalism as the political system opposed to absolutism is not condemned by the Church, but that aspect of it which seeks to obtain freedom or emancipation from moral restrictions is not to be accepted by Catholics and is condemned by the *Syllabus* of Pius IX. There must, of course, be a distinction made concerning the transposing of the words. Catholic Liberals are one group. They are not to be confused with 'Liberal Catholics.' The latter are not political in the broad sense of the word 'liberalism.' Rather they are individuals 'qualified' by the term 'liberal' and are variously engaged in promoting views that seek to inject Catholic thought into social and economic life in an effort to elevate the moral character of these activities. Although some of their views may be looked on as more 'free' than is consistent with sound Catholic teaching, the 'Liberal Catholic' is an individual rather than a party affiliate."

So there, you Liberal Catholics, or is it Catholic Liberals? Put that in your censer and smoke it.

Incidentally, there's no entry on Catholic Conservatives, or for that matter Conservative Catholics. Maybe they don't exist or need definition.

The British Touch

The British, whatever their other problems, still use the English language as if they invented it—which, come to think of it, they did, didn't they.

Thus the perfect petition on the memorial tablet recently installed in Westminster Abbey honoring the martyrs of the Reformation. In the floor, midway between the tombs of Elizabeth I, Protestant, and her half-sister Mary, Roman Catholic, is now the inscription:

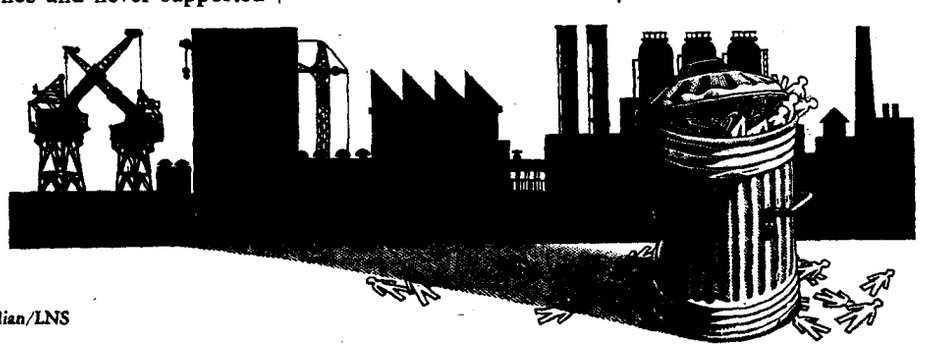
"Near the tomb of Mary and Elizabeth/ Remember before God all those who/ Divided at the Reformation/ By different convictions/Laid down their lives for/Christ and conscience sake."

Observers called the installation service one of the most ecumenically and historically significant to be held in Westminster Abbey in almost 400 years.

Odds and Ends

— Bishop Charles T. Gaskell of the Milwaukee Episcopal diocese has rejected the request of James E. Groppi, ex-R.C. priest, for admission to the priesthood of the Episcopal Church. According to news stories, there is an understanding between the Milwaukee Episcopal and Roman Catholic dioceses that neither will accept the transfer of a priest from the other. Groppi says he'll look around for another Episcopal diocese that isn't playing ecumenical footsie with Rome. But first maybe he should see an Antitrust lawyer. That Milwaukee understanding smacks of conspiracy in restraint of fair trade.

JOHN DEEDY



Guardian/LNS

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CORRESPONDENCE

Pious Piracy?

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: My first reaction to Daniel Morrissey's account of the hierarchy's attempt to corner the religious book market was one of anger that those to whom we look for piety practice a form of piracy [Aug. 19]. But, then, in a more charitable mood, I realized how important it must be for bishops to improve their circumstances and perpetuate their pomp. And it takes a lot of royalties to maintain royalty!

RAY STRUGLIA

Pros and Cons

Baltimore, Md.

To the Editors: Comments from a faithful but disgruntled reader:

(1) Getlein force feeds us with his moral outrage (and often his hates). I prefer to make my own moral judgments.

(2) Steinfels' long reply to Novak says that Steinfels can't see any new elite in the Democratic party. Look again, Peter. You may be one of them.

(3) Maguire's argument for quotas, "He who wills the end of justice must will the means necessary to that end," neglects the principle that justice depends upon prudence, the right choice of means to ends. As Aquinas says: general principles do not direct particular moral acts; moral action demands the application of reason to particular things in a particular way. Come off your high horse, Daniel, and discuss the means.

(4) Thank God for the reviews. And for Abigail McCarthy and Saul Maloff!

(REV.) DANIEL A. DEGNAN, S.J.

Wantagh, N.Y.

To the Editors: As a long-time *Commonweal* subsrciber I'd like to make two suggestions to improve things:

1. make Novak and Steinfels take a few months off. When they return,

(*Continued on page 735*)

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WHY THE POPE SHOULD RESIGN

The closing this week of the fifth Roman Synod of Bishops, with its emphasis on catechesis—or, rather, on the public understanding of the doctrines and traditions of the church—turns our attention again to the general condition of the church, and particularly to the future of its highest leadership.

For, as a number of articles on the papacy over the last three months in both the secular and religious press, plus the inescapable fact of human mortality, have made clear, Pope Paul VI, either by death or retirement, will make way for a successor. Consummate man of faith that he is, Paul VI does not shrink from either the thought or the open discussion of his own death. "I see the end of my life approaching," he said last summer. Indeed, his generous and heroic offer in October to give himself as a hostage to gain the freedom of the 86 hostages held captive aboard the West German airliner in Somalia also indicates not only that he accepts death—since to become the hostage of terrorists is virtually to invite martyrdom—but also that he does not see his continued reign as indispensable to the church. It indirectly highlights an understanding of the papacy that this pope has not emphasized that much before: the pope himself can decide how long he should be pope.

Paul VI, now 80 years old and often weak, isolated and depressed, has been pope 14 years. As a man who profoundly understands the power of the symbolic act to heighten public understanding of a moral and theological truth, he should now move public appreciation of the papacy onto a new plane by giving the papacy up. For although the temporal nature of the papal office is both a theological truth and a historical fact,

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we have been conditioned to visualize a papacy where the religious leader, like a king, endures, powers failing, to the last hour, while courtiers jockey for his favor or his ear. We are still stuck with a papacy modeled on European monarchy, constructed to meet a real need for an independent and stable religious institution that could maintain the church's political position through centuries of turmoil. In a time when men didn't live quite so long that seemed to call for a life-time term. But now, in a democratic age, it seems rather the reluctance of Roman curial officials to relinquish their power that has kept modern popes hanging on till death.

Paul VI, perhaps the most intelligent of modern popes, knows that he is neither an emperor nor a king. He is a servant—like Christ, the servant of servants. It is this understanding of his role—that his ultimate function is not to impose his will on history but rather to minister in a preeminent way, both realistically and symbolically, to the people of God—that should lead him to retire while his act of voluntarily relinquishing power would still have meaning to the world.

Reportedly, Paul VI has argued that he could not resign because of the example of Christ who did not lay down his cross and because as "father" of the church he could not desert his family. But carrying the cross is not the essence of the papal office; it is part of every Christian's daily life. Nor is the "Holy Father" the father of the church in the manner of a family's father—though the modern idea of fatherhood would make him less physically isolated from his children. But it is the example of Jesus as much as anything that should lead Paul VI to resign, for Jesus was not afraid to set his apostles free; he knew that the original church could come into full maturity only when he was gone, when he had ascended to the one and only Father of us all, and when the Spirit was sent forth as Christ's continued but invisible presence.

On a more political level, Vatican-watchers argue that the present pope feels he must hang on because he doesn't want to run away from his battle with Archbishop Lefebvre, because he must block some particular reactionary, or unreliable, or too-liberal prelate from gaining power; or because, having looked over the crop, sees no clearly worthy successor. Alas, few great men see many younger men worthy of succeeding them; and it is hardly clear that conditions for picking a wise, holy and vigorous vicar of Christ will be better three, or five or—if he lives to 90—ten years from now. Even in a secular-rationalistic age, Christians must have confidence that the Spirit will aid the talent search today.

Paul VI should also resign as his final contribution to the ecumenical movement which, with his encouragement, has already made progress on the understanding of both the eucharist and the ministry. For the future reunion of Christendom can best take place around the papacy, but in the context of a papacy where the pope himself can give moral and pastoral leadership to our fellow Christian churches without dominating them through a too-exalted notion of his authority and prestige. In the same way, resignation for this pope would be particularly fitting—though especially difficult—because he has been so preoccupied with papal authority.

Finally, Paul VI should retire because the picture of a pope who has enough confidence in his people that he need not hold control until death will communicate a more vigorous, credible, realistic, humble and hopeful message about the church to the same disaffected masses of young unbelievers the Synod hoped to address. The contemporary attitude toward the aged may be terrible in many ways; but, in general, people are reasonable in not wanting important issues in their lives determined by men in their 80s—a fact which Paul himself acknowledged in requiring bishops to retire at 75 and barring cardinals over 80 from voting in the papal election.

What can Pope Paul VI do when he retires? In a way he can go on doing most of the best things he is doing now: he will always be Giovanni Battista Montini, a brilliant, warm and, above all, holy man who carries his cross and, in a unique way, bears witness to God's presence among men.

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FROM BRITAIN

ARE NUKES CRICKET?

On a recent Saturday, on the spur of the moment, my wife and I decided to pack a quick snack for lunch and drive out of the muck and sweat of industrial Birmingham down to sweet and sunny Worcester to watch the Australian cricket team playing the local county side. Worcester has a county cricket ground which still retains some of the atmosphere of a village green. The Cathedral beams over the rim of the trees with a sort of benevolent smile that only English sandstone can muster on a bright sunny morning. The crowds are modest by football standards, or even by the standards of the big city cricket-grounds like Lords or the Oval in London. People seem more inclined than elsewhere to dump their disposable tea-cups and sandwich papers in the bins provided instead of leaving them on the terraces to blow about or gather flies.

Worcester's cricket is a clean and tidy business, almost domestic in its blissful defiance of the encroaching outside world. One tragedy did befall the scene that morning: and this was bad for the visiting team, Greg Chappell, the Australian captain, had to retire hurt with a knee injury after making an elegant hundred

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runs not out. But this was hardly enough to ripple the calm of a day well and truly spent on the upkeep of civilization against the barbarians.

Naturally, in such surroundings, one tends to muse, during the gaps in the action of the cricket, upon the imminent collapse of Western culture. A cricket match, after all, is so eloquent, in its leisurely gentleness, of an order that is elsewhere nearly extinct, that it automatically brings the spectator to ponder on the fragility of the remaining human decencies. It was therefore with the greatest relief (a relief made doubly memorable by virtue of the situation I have just described) that we read on that very day of a decision by the British government that may turn out to be the best, and most important one they have taken in the past decade or so. I mean the decision to postpone the plan to take Britain into what has come to be called a "plutonium economy" until adequate public discussion of the issues involved has taken place for a sensible and informed policy to be formulated.

Everyone knew that fairly soon a decision would have to be taken. An important public report of an expert committee—the "Flowers report"—was published some months ago. In this report the issues were pretty well set out, and a call was clearly made for more public discussion, and an opening up of the whole problem to public view. Even the pleas of the military for the usual secrecy were discounted to some extent in the interests of greater political awareness and participation.

It was always possible that the government would shelve the report's findings and then go for some advantages in the short run by taking a hasty decision to "go nuclear." After all, plenty of other hefty reports by publicly-appointed committees have been gathering dust for the last ten years while quite different policies are formulated elsewhere. But perhaps the thirst for great "public debates" has been whetted by the recent attempts by the government to whip up interest in the question of educational standards through the initiation of a "great debate" on that issue—a point I mentioned in another recent *Commonweal* report.

Anyway, whatever the motives, the fact is that instead of being faced with a *fait accompli* in the autumn, in the shape of a firm decision to begin building the plutonium economy now, the country is shortly to be confronted by a barrage of opposing opinions and expert assessments: on the reactor-safety question, on the question of threats to civil liberties implied in an immensely security-conscious nuclearized economy, and on the international dangers of any proliferation of weapons-systems.

But it is worth asking the question, what does such a "great debate" really mean? In such a complex technical, and unpredictable area as this one, can "the public" really take part intelligently? Is the process not likely to generate more heat than light? More physical rather than logical demonstrations? And ought not some sort of "referendum" have to be the culminating act? Doubtless there will be plenty of demands for that; but I can't see much hope of our getting one—even supposing that a referendum were altogether a good thing. However, there is one advantage that this debate has over the education case: namely that, at some time or other, a decision will *have* to be made. Education is not a question that often issues in a single clear-cut decision: but whether or or not to go nuclear is necessarily a matter of that kind. Perhaps the nature of the decision to be made, and its irrevocableness, will help to focus the public mind.

It is interesting that Peter Shore, the Environment Secretary, has indicated that he intends to conduct the great debate by invoking a hitherto unused bit of legal machinery, namely a "public inquiry commission." This particular sort of inquiry is intended to be conducted when the issues involved are of an exceptionally complex sort, and at the same time are of outstanding general significance for the public as a whole. It is not yet clear exactly how it will work. But it is certain that in addition to this top-level government-sponsored

WOMEN PRIESTS: MEDIUM OR MESSAGE?

This is just a note about the ordination of women which concerns "formal causality," i.e., structural form which is inseparable from "putting on" one's public. The writer's or performer's public is the formal cause of his art or entertainment or his philosophy. The *figure/ground* relation between writer and public, or between the artist and his making, is an interplay, a kind of intercourse. This interplay is at its peak in all performance before the public, and is characteristic of role-playing in general. There is, as it were, a sexual relation between performer and public which relates specifically to the priest or minister. The congregation is necessarily feminine to the masculine role of the priest. (This is characteristic also in medicine, where the surgeon is only exceptionally a woman.) It is, therefore, this inherent sexual aspect of the priesthood that makes the ordination of women impractical and unacceptable to a congregation in their feminine role.

In the milieu of unisex, or electronic loss of private identity, the ordination of women can be conceived as a corporate or group event, not in a sacramental but in a sociological sense.

MARSHALL MCLUHAN

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public debate, many organizations, from universities to churches, and from the Friends of the Earth to the big energy corporations, will be involved in mounting their own educational programs and confrontations, and publicizing their own propaganda exercises on behalf of their points of view. Only a few days ago, a list of fifteen hundred anti-nuclear signatories was published in *The Guardian* as a first shot across the bows of the pro-nuclear lobby. It is interesting, though doubtless futile, to speculate whether this piece of public-opinion-forming had any noticeable effect on the cabinet decision finally to go for the immediate discussion rather than the immediate dissemination of nuclear energy, as the first priority of public policy, despite the pleas of the pro-nuclear interests to get on with the job and bow to what they regard as the inevitable.

Meanwhile, the Windscale enquiry into the pros and cons of nuclear waste processing and the development of fast-breeder reactors in Britain goes on. The case for has now been completed: and shortly, the public will begin to hear something positive of the case against. The best organized of the anti-nuclear bodies, the Friends of the Earth, is poised to launch its counter-attack on the case put up by British Nuclear Fuels. But there is a problem of money to be faced even now. The costs of the enquiry are becoming so great that there is some chance that the anti-nuclear case may go by default simply because the various lobbies cannot afford to keep their counsel retained for the length of time needed to do justice to the argument. It would be a tragedy if this were to happen: surely if the government means business with its commitment to the 'great debate' it should see to it, somehow, that both sides get the money they need to mount their arguments successfully?

BRIAN WICKER

(*Brian Wicker is* Commonweal's regular correspondent *in Great Britain.*)

MARY OLIVER

YOU KNOW HOW IT FEELS

You know how it feels,
Wanting to walk into
The rain and disappear—

Wanting to feel your life
Brighten and grow weightless
As a leaf in the fall.

And sometimes, for a moment,
You feel it beginning—the sense
Of escape sharp as a knife-blade

Hangs over the dark field
Of your body, and your soul
Waits just under the skin

To leap away over the water.
But the blade,
At the last minute, hesitates

And does not fall,
And the body does not open,
And you are what you are—

Trapped, heavy and visible
Under the rain, only your vision
Delicate as old leaves skimming

Over the mounds of the seasons,
The limits of everything,
The few shaped bones of time.

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HUMAN RIGHTS: CONFLICTS AMONG OUR IDEALS

DAVID RIESMAN

The focus inevitably plays into the Cold War mentality

In the course of dealing with intricate moral questions which at the same time, like all moral questions of import, are intensely practical ones, I shall be making some criticism of the bias of ethnocentrism implicit in some of the current campaign for human rights. But I should make clear that I am not free of biases myself; I can only strive to be aware of them. Nevertheless, I hope that, by raising some issues for discussion, I can invite questioning. Any reflection on human rights and human prospects suggests the possibility of conflicts among our ideals; that is, the possibility that the proclaimed goal of human rights may inadvertently risk the human prospects of survival itself. The risk I have in mind is of immediate destruction through what I have regarded, since Hiroshima, as the overarching danger to the species, that is, the existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility to which these give rise of an escalating nuclear conflict among the superpowers. I supported the candidacy of President Carter on a number of grounds, chief among them the fact that he is the first president with a technical understanding of those weapons and with a serious and systematic interest in controlling and eventually banishing them—an effort that must begin between the Soviet Union and ourselves before we can hope to restrain proliferation among those other nations who now possess such weapons in actuality or potential.

At the same time, in lending his prestige and immense moral capital to the campaign for human rights vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, I think it is possible that President Carter has jeopardized his hopes on the all-important nuclear front, and I think so not only because prominent officialdom in the Soviet Union says so, but because of my understanding of the long-run impact of the Carter campaign on *American* public opinion. Indeed, I find it difficult to predict the possible impact of the human rights campaign, not so much on the vocal dissidents who have already suffered jeopardy, but on the generally silent but nonetheless in the long run influential public opinion of non-elites in the Soviet Union and its uneasy satellites.

The campaign for human rights vis-à-vis the Soviet Union of course did not begin with President Carter. In one sense, it goes back to the very beginning of the Soviet regime, while long before that the insistence of many Americans on the proper moral conduct of other countries was a factor in launching us both into the Spanish-American War and the First World War. The contemporary campaign vis-à-vis the Soviet Union would seem to take its origin at the conclusion of the fighting in Vietnam, and, in some degree, to represent the unliquidated continuation of the American domestic conflict over that war by other means and with somewhat altered partisans. Liberal intellectuals, public officials, and interest groups ranging from influential American Zionists to longshoremen to the hard-liners who run the international division of the AFL-CIO have been in the forefront of the human rights issue, in some part as an attack on the effort to achieve détente by former President Nixon and Henry Kissinger —an attack joined by the Republican Cold War Right, and the Democratic-Liberal Left with its call for an open moral diplomacy, superior to *Realpolitik*. The

DAVID RIESMAN *is a professor in the Department of Sociology at Harvard University and the author of* The Lonely Crowd. *The above article is excerpted from a Commencement Address given at Williams College in Massachusetts.*

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campaign appeals to our idealism: to our hope of living in a world without torture, without slavery, one where people are free to speak and to move about—although I must add that the current campaign against illegal immigrants (mainly Spanish-speaking) and indeed against further immigration at all (now sponsored by the Zero Population Growth movement), fits in badly with a desire for more open frontiers.

It is not a sufficient argument against our human rights campaign that we ourselves often violate our own ideals in practice, not only vis-à-vis immigration of people but also vis-à-vis importation of goods which others can make more efficiently than we and which we attempt to limit or keep out through ever-increasing efforts at protectionism. The very point of an ideal is that it is something not easily achieved. And I believe that no American policy, foreign or domestic, is viable which rests on a definition of the national interest—a concept which I am inclined to question—which fails to take account of our national idealism; the problem is to adjudicate among competing ideals.

The notion that ideals may not be compatible with each other is often difficult for Americans to accept; we are inclined to believe that all good things are compatible: that we can have *both* human survival and human rights without any risks to the former or compromise or delay with respect to the latter. This resembles the belief that we can have more jobs *and* more environmental amenities; more social and human services, *and* less strenuous and exhausting conditions in the work to be done.

Furthermore, the focus on human rights, though now voiced by a generally liberal Democratic administration, inevitably plays into the never wholly defeated Cold War mentality of ethnocentric and patrioteering Americans even while President Carter is seeking to open up our relations with Cuba and Panama, with Vietnam and even with North Korea.

Last June's graduating class belongs to a generation which (judging from my questions to students on this issue over a period of many years) has not grown up with nightmares of the possibility of nuclear devastation. Viet Nam was not seen as an issue of nuclear peril, as it was for me, but as a moral outrage and, for many, a personal threat and a personal moral dilemma. Since we have lived for over thirty years without the use of nuclear weapons in war, our good fortune in this respect reminds me of Joseph Schumpeter's verdict on capitalism: it would be destroyed by its beneficiaries who had no hand in its adventures and triumphs; similarly, today's young people who have not had to deal with the detailed issues, for example of the current SALT agreements and all previous arms control negotiations, are the beneficiaries of an unearned beneficence which directs their idealism toward other, readier targets, for example, the Seabrook power plant.

My generation is the product of a different history. I did not share a number of attitudes that prevailed in this country during the Second World War. I never for a moment had any sympathy for Stalinism and I regarded Soviet brutalities as quite as murderous as Hitler's (though probably as somewhat more defensive and less madly driven by a desire to conquer all of Europe, Africa, and Asia, if not the planet). Yet, despite my fear lest Hitler emerge victorious, I believed at the time and still do that the British and American dropping of ordinary bombs and fire bombs on Dresden and Hamburg, as well as on Tokyo and other large Japanese cities, transcended the limits which need to be placed on warfare; and was not necessary for Allied survival, since for those who would listen there was evidence that the Japanese were succumbing to a Naval blockade and that the Emperor and his circle were eager for peace. Vis-à-vis the Nazis, if we had not demanded unconditional surrender, we might not have had to wage total war with such destructive weapons. Only in the Vietnam War did any large number of educated Americans begin to criticize the waging of total war against civilian populations even with the excuse of saving American lives when the cost was the destruction of civilian "enemy" life, including in Vietnam, plant life, in the country under attack.

Still, terrible as these mass bombings were, carried on with so-called conventional weapons, for me the use of nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked a profound dividing line. In the decades since then, I had fought those supposed realists like Edward Teller and many strategists, who, pointing out that the largest conventional weapons were more deadly than the smallest nuclear ones, sought to erase the formal line between nuclear war and all other kinds of war; the idea, toyed with in Vietnam, that one could use tactical nuclear weapons, seemed to me a dangerous delusion; things generally go wrong with such calculations, which resemble one-person chess, and escalation to mutual annihilation has seemed to me the likely result.

There have been many agonizing moments over the last thirty years in which hopes for rapprochement were shattered by internal politics of the Soviet Union or of the United States. Or just as a meeting was planned to discuss the end of nuclear testing, and the possibility of control of nuclear weapons, something quite accidental prevented it. To take an example, the U-2 spy flight may not have been quite accidental, but undertaken by those who wanted to risk and perhaps torpedo the forthcoming summit meeting between Khrushchev and Eisenhower. But what seems in a sense accidental was Eisenhower's rather uncharacteristic insistence on being candid, open, and the all-American boy in accepting responsibility for the U-2 incident, which destroyed the summit meeting at which an arms limitation treaty might have been reached. In that con-

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text, President Carter's raising of the human rights issue at the same time that he hoped to assure success of the SALT talks, gave me a feeling of *déjà vu.*

Tribalism within nation-states and among nation-states remains the most powerful force at work in the world today, more powerful even than class conflicts although especially powerful when (as in Belgium and in some measure in Northern Ireland and in Israel between the European and the Mediterranean Jews) tribal and class divisions coincide. The recent American presidential election was fought along both lines of fission. When I became an early supporter of Candidate Jimmy Carter, I found myself in Massachusetts opposed by many on the grounds of both regional and religious tribalism—by people with no understanding of or sympathy with the complexities of Southern theological traditions and suspicious of white Southerners in general. Yet as C. Vann Woodward pointed out a number of years ago, white Southerners are the only major American group to have suffered military defeat, and at least in some instances are therefore likely to have a sense of limits and of tragedy. I need not tell you that this has not been a general American characteristic, nor even a Southern one.

But President Carter is an American as he is Southern. He has an all-American faith that problems are soluble and that they can be resolved not only within but among nations especially when talked about candidly and openly. (The insistence on openness, that there be no secrets, is not only a legacy of Watergate and of often moralistic attacks on Henry Kissinger's style of secret covenants secretly arrived at, but also reflects earlier attitudes, many of them penetratingly discussed by Edward Shils in his book, *The Torment of Secrecy*, which dealt with the egalitarianism and populism of the Joseph McCarthy era, and the concomitant judgment that a secret is elitist or exclusive, keeping ordinary Americans out—like a clique at school; to keep a secret is somehow unfair. The fear of secrecy rests also on a fear of conspiracies which goes back to the founding of the American Republic, and the recurrent belief that evil consequences are the effect of malign conspiracies, which in fact sometimes is true (though my own inclination is more to see muddle or even good intentions gone astray than to see conspiracies, though to be sure we have our share of these). Given these American attitudes which often verge on paranoia as to all the secret goings on which will do the ordinary person in at the hands of government or of large, invisible corporations, the President must take account of the need to explain, when negotiations are being conducted in secret, why this is necessary in terms of the internal cultural and political outlooks of the countries with which one is dealing and of the special subcultures of their leaders in and out of power, but also to prevent early forestalling, for example, of arms agreements, by leakage of classified documents which purport to show, for example, that the Soviet Union is building a massive civil defense apparatus with the presumptive aim of being able to engage in a nuclear first strike and not suffer devastating reprisals. Thus candor can be both right conduct and successful strategy. Yet to believe that it will always work seems to me an often unconscious ethnocentric failure to appreciate that we cannot approach other countries in the same way that at times, in our cults of intimacy and of sharing, in our demolishing of the line between public and private, we approach each other both in adversary journalism and in many aspects of personal life.

The fact that the Soviet Union lacks adversary journalism (except in *Samizdat* or the privately circulated writings of dissidents) and is not an open

society has been a stumbling block in the effort to secure a test ban treaty which would cover underground testing since our negotiators insisted at the time of the negotiations of the partial test ban treaty of 1963 that it would be impossible without such inspection to distinguish between an underground test and an earthquake. To the extent that I have been able to familiarize myself with the technical issues here, this was a mistaken and even tendentious judgment: the best seismic experts believe that a distinction is easily made between an underground test and an earthquake; moreover our spy satellites and our intelligence can tell us what is going on in the Soviet Union, even though we do not always want to reveal how much we know because that will tip off the Soviet Union as to how we know it. Above all, any analysis of this sort must distinguish between capabilities and intentions, and much of our thinking about the Soviet Union, like that of military men professionally, has been "worst case" thinking—a mode of thinking which can be self-confirming since it creates an alliance of the supposedly patriotic war party inside the United States with the patriotic war party within the Soviet Union, against the civilian populations of both countries. ("Worst case" thinking is of course not confined to this particular dialectic; it goes on between Israeli and Palestinian and Arab groups—the latter may indeed fear that, if the Soviet Union should suddenly and astonishingly accede to American pressure and re-

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lease several million Jews, few of whom want in fact to emigrate to Israel, expansionist claims by Israeli-hardliners would become even more provocative of Arab fears.)

I recognize that the imagination of future scenarios is an important enterprise both in intellectual terms and in the light of problems of policy. What is important is to analyze the kinds of thinking involved in particular scenarios. To illustrate, the American Cold War hawks, who have repeatedly imagined a Soviet first strike, have had also to assume the existence of a berserk Soviet leadership, which believed it had the capacity to knock out all our hardened missiles, our underseas submarines, our Strategic Air Command, and now our mobile land weapons—and I say "berserk" because such a policy would rest on the assumption, I think quite obviously false, that in human affairs everything will go right, rather than the more sensible assumption that much, if not everything, will go wrong. Indeed, the Russian experience in wars, from the Russo-Japanese War through the First and Second World Wars, has in fact been that most things have gone wrong.

Again to underline the fact that Jimmy Carter did not begin but is in fact trying to curb the American temptation to worst case thinking, we should recall the fact that candidate John Kennedy made the utterly factitious "missile gap" the main theme of his attack on candidate Richard Nixon and the previous Republican administration—indeed, later, at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, he had done what no other American president has to my knowledge done, namely, endangered the planet in order to force Premier Khrushchev to back down. He created a crisis situation out of the Soviet missiles in Cuba, an issue that could have been handled more safely over time, since in reality the United States was no more threatened by these missiles in Cuba (over which Soviet control was maintained) than by those ICBMs already in place or potentially located in offshore submarines. The relatively conciliatory Khrushchev, who had been the first openly to admit to the crimes of the Stalin Era, was forced out of office by his internal enemies, I believe in part as a result of this. But I should add that, in what I regard as the finest act of his presidency, John Kennedy got the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other crucial "hardline" groups not to oppose the partial test ban treaty of 1963 even though he was unable, as I have indicated, to achieve a ban on all tests, in the atmosphere and underground.

The history of our relations with the Soviet Union over the control of nuclear weapons is a history of might-have-beens. As mentioned earlier, when President Eisenhower in what was for him an uncharacteristic act of boyish openness, accepted responsibility for the U-2 overflight (an overflight whose timing may or may not have been accidental), one possible moment of rapprochment was lost. (See my article, "The U-2 Affair and After," *The Commonweal*, June 8, 1962.) Now my fear is that Brezshnev may be forced out of office by his illness, giving still further power to other factions in the Soviet military-industrial complex, before a new SALT agreement has been reached.

It is in this situation that the launching of the human rights campaign against the Soviet Union seems to me so perilous. It was not begun by Candidate or President Carter. It has been carried on by Senator Jackson and others in the Senate—and I should add that Senator Jackson is a man who, contrary to widespread cynicism, is not only the "Senator from Boeing Aircraft," but also a true believer in human rights, as are many other idealistic Americans. And just as Senator Jackson had been mistaken in insisting that the Soviet Union would on materialistic grounds accept our trade terms while accepting also our vocal criticism concerning the emigration of Jewish dissidents (we raised no question about other captive nationalities), so President Carter began his administration by insisting that the Soviet Union would come to terms on the SALT agreements (and also on other outstanding issues) because there would be gains for them, and at the same time insisting on their accepting our standards of human rights as well. Meantime, the Senate has already indicated where it stands by its vote of considerably less than two-thirds in favor of the confirmation of Paul Warnke as our disarmament negotiator. And the human rights issue itself vis-à-vis the Soviet Union can be taken up readily by the Congress to use against the President, who is himself now inclined to be more cautious on the issue—in other words to use against a SALT agreement, restricting the development of new nuclear weapons systems. In fact, the judgment of many experts as well as my own is that we are more than amply protected by the mobile and dispersed weapons we already possess. By giving the movement for human rights full legitimacy at an earlier point, it may have transcended President Carter's ability to control and focus it.

But I now must enter an area where I can claim no expertise, namely, that of the internal politics of the Soviet Union—yet an area where I am guided by a certain skepticism bred in me by experience with American Sovietologists going back to the 1930s. I had the odd experience, during the height of the Cold War in the middle and late 1950s, of being told I was "soft on Communism" by people whom I had known when they were Communists, Trotskyites, Schachtmanites, etc., and when I was, as I have remained, convinced of the brutality, the corruption, and in many areas, the sheer incompetence of Soviet society. Some of these Russian experts, among them a few of my colleagues at Harvard, were among the last to realize what Victor Zorza had long been pointing out, namely, the likelihood, of a

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Sino-Soviet split in what had been thought of as monolithic World Communism. More important, I have seen the Soviet Union as suffering even more from internal tribalism than we do, with many nationalities struggling to get out from under the control of the Great Russians, and in which the countries of the Eastern Zone produce superior consumer goods and have a higher standard of living, in spite of having constantly to pay tribute to the Soviet Union, than do the citizens of the latter. I am not contending that Soviet citizens are ready to break out in open revolt, but rather that Soviet authorities see themselves as beleaguered by China on the West, West Germany and the especially threatening dangers of French and Italian Communism in Western Europe (threatening because they are not under Soviet hegemony), and then of course by the United States. The Soviet Union has never been able to achieve the the kind of disciplined workforce and the internalized as well as superficial obedience that the Chinese Communists appear to have been able to instill, drawing in part on long Confucian and other traditions. Hence, I see the fact that the Soviets have a long tradition of superiority in artillery, and that they can make and no doubt deliver huge bombs, to be as much a sign of defensiveness as aggression—indeed, their foreign policy in recent years has been a series of defeats—even though their defensiveness, in dialectic with ours, may, in the form of nuclear war, end their prospects and ours.

This outlook has meant for me a necessary restraint in criticism of the Soviet Union, even while prior to this era, there remained in this country quite a few influential intellectuals and writers who, as currently in many European countries, blinded themselves to the cruelties of the regime because it called itself socialist and because of their awareness of the evils of their own nation-states. And today I am in a position of deep moral ambiguity because, on the one hand, I admire enormously the courage of the Soviet dissidents, whatever their personal ideologies, and share many of the values that inspire someone like the scientist Sakharov, but at the same time I have consistently refused to sign petitions or in any other way lend my name to the cruelties of the regime because it called itself In a bipolar nuclear world, I do not feel we can afford to hold to a simple, straightforward, universalistic moral standard such as one might hope for in a world free of the threat of mass annihilation.

I am well aware that there are many students of the Soviet Union who would disagree with my analysis, who believe that the regime is fully effective, secure and unthreatened, that its leaders only pretend to be stung by criticisms—criticisms which I regard as justified in any circumstances other than our nuclear era at the very moment when we are trying to reach across that chasm for some understanding.

I can illustrate my point by several counter-examples. I have been one of those active in the defense of the Belgrade philosophers of whose now banned journal, *Praxis*, I have been an Advisory Editor. A group of us working quietly to protect these philosophers, while at the same time seeking to give them support, worked with great caution and sought not to humiliate Marshal Tito publicly, let alone to put our countries on an adversary course. We wrote personal letters and carefully drafted petitions which were without publicity given to the Marshal and to the Yugoslav Embassy, in a way which we believed would neither threaten the dissidents themselves (including some brave ones who might have wanted martyrdom) nor run risks of inflaming American public opinion against another Communist, though not Soviet-dominated country. Similarly, when the Allende regime was overthrown in Chile, I was in touch with friends such as Professors Albert Hirschman and Gino Germani who are Latin American specialists, to see what could be done to rescue and save from imprisonment and torture liberal Catholics and socialists and others whom the new regime regarded as its enemies, but we sought to do so without publicly humiliating the new Chilean government and thus leading it to further cruel measures against dissenters who could be accused of links with the "imperialist" North Americans.

Thus, I want to emphasize that my position on human rights does not spring from cultural or moral relativism. While one must take account of local conditions, and of the perils and priorities of other peoples, that does not mean that one condones ancient Aztec human sacrifice or today's tribal murders in Bangladesh. During the Second World War, I served on an international committee that had been set up to prepare for what would become the United Nations, a draft of an International Bill of Rights. What I sought for in that body were eventually attainable ideals, bearing in mind Margaret Mead's parable about the star and the wagon, in which if the star is too remote from the wagon, it no longer gives direction for the wagon that remains mired in mud, and the start becomes an illusion. To repeat: it is because I see the nuclear question as always foremost that I cannot be sanguine about the human prospect in the long run unless the human rights issue of this moment in this country is made less salient.

SEMINARS ON WORLD HUNGER—At Princeton Theological Seminary, 12 Library Place, Princeton, N.J., a seminar on the theological and moral dimensions of hunger November 21-23. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake and Bishop Joseph Francis, S.V.D. will lead the discussion; six theologians from varying backgrounds will present papers for discussion. A fifty-dollar registration fee includes room and meals. Later seminars of the Bread for the World Educational Fund will be held at the University of Dayton (Dec. 9-11) and at the University of Notre Dame (Feb. 24-26).

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CONSTRUCTING LOCAL THEOLOGIES

ERNEST W. RANLY

The movement is beginning to take some definite form

There is a ripple upon the waters of systematic theology which may be only the passing of a light breeze, but which may well be a sign of some deep, strong currents, a genuine movement of the Spirit. It is a little too early to test the waters. The movement often goes by the name of Constructing Local Theologies. For example, at the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago under the program of Cross Cultural Studies, Robert Schreiter has been teaching a course on Constructing Local Theologies and has been directing his students—many of them with long years of experience in other cultures—to draw up a local theology from within a very distinctive cultural setting. This is something much bigger than and different from Liberation Theology, with its economic and political roots in Latin America. It is something very different from traditional courses in missiology. An example of a local theology fairly well known in the United States—with its supporters and opponents—is Black Theology. Today the movement of constructing local theologies is beginning to take some definite form, with a sense of its own inner discipline and direction; slowly, a literature is being organized. It seems valuable to describe this movement, to understand its rationale and to assess its objectives.

It is ironical that the more the human family becomes united by a common worldwide technology and economy into a single Global Village, the more we hear about the need to respect and promote a diversity and plurality of cultures, ethnic values and local communities. Christian missionaries have always found it necessary not only to learn the local language and customs of a people, but also to make some kind of cultural translation of the Christian Gospel into a local Catechism. Many missionaries, however well trained in a native language, found it difficult to comprehend the deeper thought and value patterns in a culture and a religiosity very different from their own. The fear of a shallow syncretism in which pagan beliefs survive in disguised forms forced most missionaries into keeping all doctrinal formulas and all rites and ceremonies either in Latin itself or in such frozen statements that at least the missionaries themselves felt comfortably orthodox. Often the indigenous religion and culture were considered diabolical and strong efforts were made to destroy them. As a matter of fact, the native people often disguised their original beliefs and the new Christianity became little more than a veneer. The present state of popular Catholicism throughout much of Latin America is a result of this kind of missionizing.

As recently as the 1960s the presupposition of the Grand Misión in many parts of South America was that the people are pagan and that evangelization and Christianization must begin anew. The formation of Catholic Action cells and the early groups of *Comunidades Cristianas de Base* tended to be elitist; they professed a "pure" Biblical Christianity and rather looked down upon the popular religiosity of the masses as being below them and in need of reform. When Liberation Theology, with strong documentation from Medellin, began to insist that the Church be on the side of the poor, of the oppressed, of the marginated, and the powerless peoples of the world, these groups of elitist Christians discovered that they, too, for all their social and economic concerns for the poor, could not really identify with the masses. There was a cultural gap which was primarily religious. The elitist groups could not identify with, nor even appreciate the popular religiosity of the common people.

The documents of Vatican II on "Missions" and on "Non-Christians" really do not touch upon the present enterprise of constructing local theologies. The former contains beautiful dogmatic formulas about the missionary character of the Church, but its practical suggestions are quite traditional, almost institutional. The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions has three very short paragraphs on "other religions," outside of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. It states:

> The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which . . . often reflect a ray of That Truth which enlightens all men. . . . The Church, therefore, has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral

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good found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.

This is a far cry from condemning non-Christian religions as diabolical and in need of total uprooting and destruction. But neither does it supply the foundation or building blocks in the construction of local theologies. Yet perhaps one can speak of a "spirit" of Vatican II that has prepared Catholic leaders in Africa, in the Orient, and in the South Pacific to accept more openly the inherent religious (Christian?) values in the indigenous religions. And in this spirit, theologians and cultural anthropologists have been encouraged in the task of creating local theologies.

Other Disciplines

As philosophy has traditionally played the handmaiden to theology in the formulation of Western—highly Hellenized—forms of theology, so today the academic disciplines of anthropology and sociology serve as ancillary disciplines to the constructing of local theologies. But this is not a simplistic physical anthropology or simply a codification of ethnographical studies. At best, it is in the tradition of cultural anthropology, recently buttressed by the philosophical disciplines of linguistic analysis (semiotics) and phenomenology. (Structuralism as proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss and his followers, for all its fascination for some, is so general and universal in its claims that it does not seem to lend itself well to the constructing of local theologies.)

A good place to start, perhaps, is with some sociological-anthropological principles enunciated by Peter Berger in his intriguing (if somewhat controversial) book, *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (Anchor, 1976). Berger speaks of a "postulate of the equality of all empirically available worlds of consciousness." Human groups live together in shared worlds in which people are conscious of reality in terms of specific cognitive structures that give cohesion and meaning to the ongoing flux of their experiences. Berger insists: "Moral judgments apart, every human world must be deemed, in principle, as being equal to every other human world in its access to reality." Berger calls this attitude one of "cognitive respect," that "every consciousness is immediate to reality," but that there is no hierarchical ordering according to some a priori principles by which one cultural world is higher or better than another. This is not to deny the tremendous differences between the "world" of a political economist, an oriental guru, an atomic physicist, a Peruvian peasant-pastor in the highlands of the Andes, and a Thomas Aquinas reworking Christian theology into Aristotelian categories. But cognitive respect and the postulate of equality will foster the mental attitude that all mental-cultural worlds are equal in their access to reality.

This is a very difficult position for the Western mind, which, from the Greeks onward through the Enlightenment and recent science, has always thought it knew Man—natural, universal, and constant. But as Clifford Geertz has pointed out (*The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books) we should not look for Man with a capital "M" "behind," "under," or "beyond" his customs, but that man, uncapitalized, is to be looked for "in" his customs "in" his culture. Geertz states substantially the social theory of Berger. "Man needs and finds meaning for himself only in an organized system of significant symbols given to him by the unified cultural tradition in which he is born and reared." A human becomes human only through the humanizing medium of his/her own culture. Many cultures (e.g., the eskimo) use the word *man* (*human*) to refer only to the members of their own culture-race; all other people are *non-humans*, just as the Greeks referred to all non-Greeks as barbarians. Such an enclosed cultural world is the only human world for its own members.

Yet the danger is that pure ideal types of culture may be manufactured in the minds of theorists. Empirical ethnographical data never discover such a perfectly closed cultural world. All cultures meet and clash and react within the larger territorial space of the earth's surface and in yet a larger human cultural world. The very study of an isolated group of aborigines no longer leaves the group isolated. It has forever been touched by people and cultures outside of it. Even if the isolated group totally rejects all future contacts, in its very rejection, it is already changed. Therefore, all known cultures are complex mixtures of a vast number of factors, often beyond the recall of people in that culture and of scholars studying the culture. It is like trying to account for Easter eggs within the Christian celebration of the Resurrection. More than ever today, aspects of modernization—industrialization, technology, a unified world market—has touched and is changing all but the most isolated cultural groups.

The attempt to limit one culture for study is parallel to the metaphysical study of *being* which lies somehow between the unchangeable and permanent Being of Parmenides and the world of flux and change of Heraclitus. Eventually, humanly and pragmatically, one catches a particular culture at a particular moment and attempts to define and describe it in its very center as far as that is possible. It is like catching Whiteheadian Being in process, which is, nonetheless, no less authentically and ontologically *being*.

Perhaps the very recent semiotic analysis of culture can best supply the principle of identity and identification for such a study of culture. Using the physical example of the central nervous system as its model, the semiotic approach to culture states that every culture has a deeply embedded, highly complex, but tightly unified sense of meaning (an elaborate communication

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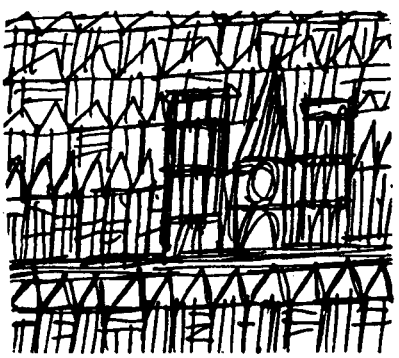
system) within which the people of that culture live. We have seen that both Berger and Geertz define this cultural world of meaning as absolutely primary. Ethnographical studies may give valuable data concerning marriage relationships, magical practices, rites of passage, funeral practices and so on. The anthropological theory of functionalism searches for the pragmatic, functional reason behind cultural traditions and practices. The semiotics of culture, without rejecting any of these approaches, seeks to discover an inner web of meaning which unites the diverse, multiple set of rites, customs, myths and beliefs. Each rite has its own meaning which relates more or less directly to the central meaning of the culture as a whole. The model of the central nervous system again is instructive. All the different nerves carry messages back and forth to work for an inner integration and stabilization of the total organism.

So also in a culture. There is an inner interlocking unified center of meaning, giving balance and stability to all the myths, rites, and customs. As Victor Frankl



describes logotherapy as a personal, psychological search for meaning in one's life, the semiotics of culture seeks for a cultural, global sense of meaning in every particular civilization.

According to this approach, then, an inner, coherent sense of meaning is the unifying principle of a particular culture, the very identity and genius of that culture. In contrast to the scholastic principle of finality, the inner meaning of a culture is first in reality and last in intention. That is to say that neither the subjects within the culture nor those who study the culture can easily formulate or articulate this inner meaning. Perhaps the social ideal of every civilization comes close to embodying this ideal meaning. Does a culture honor warriors, saints, technicians, hunters, poets, the rich as their major heroes? To enter into a cross-cultural experience, one does not state a priori the main inner meaning of the new culture. One can only look for the meanings concretely embodied in the various individual customs, traditions, myths, rites, bits of language, and, very slowly—experientially, if not empirically—follow the entangled lines of this complex, nervous system of messages and try to decipher the deeper meanings at the very center.

Armed with the semiotics of culture, a Christian missiology will approach a new culture respectfully and cautiously. (Berger's principle of cognitive respect.) It will do its ethnographical studies carefully, but always asking to know not only what happens on the surface of a society, but also always asking to know what is its inner, deeper meaning. Geertz accepts Gilbert Ryle's analysis of a "thick description" of a cultural event. E.g., a wink as a gesture has a meaning very different from the neural-muscular-biological description of what makes an eye twitch. And the same wink may have many different meanings in different contexts. So also various funeral practices (such as burying food with the deceased) may have very different meanings in different cultural contexts. One asks of a culture *why,* not in view of some functional explanation, but merely to understand the interpretation that the bearers of the culture themselves understand as the meaning of the event.

The constructing of a local theology begins at this point. The body of Christian truth has always been accepted as "catholic," that is to say that Christianity itself transcends any and all cultures. (Unfortunately, the English language does not easily distinguish between *Christianity,* as the pure body of doctrine, and *Christendom,* the actual historical realization of these truths.) Although Greek, Russian, and Western European Christianity has dominated the history of the Christian Era, and, at times, each tradition has failed miserably in its attitude of being "catholic," yet, in principle, the Christian Church, with its good news of salvation in Jesus, has always heeded the mission of Jesus to go preach to all nations.

To construct a local theology is so much more than translating the Christian message in a new language or accommodating Christianity to a new culture, say by presenting the Holy Family in an Oriental dress and in an Oriental setting. If, as we have seen, the whole human world is given in one's cultural setting, then a preaching of Christianity which remains external to that cultural world must remain superficial, and the resulting Christianity will be only a thin veneer.

The approach proposed here is very different. It proposes to take the whole unified complex cultural understanding of the new civilization seriously and work out quite literally a "new" Christian theology from within this cultural setting.

As a concrete model or schema for constructing a local theology perhaps six basic symbols of the Christian creed can be used as a vehicle or skeleton: God, sin, grace, Christ, redemption and kingdom. Gregory Baum (following what he calls "the Blondelian shift") has proposed in *Man Becoming* that individually we have all experienced these verities as realities in our personal life; the act of Christian Faith and practice is to make all this explicit and formal. What Baum proposes for

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the individual (in a Western Christian setting) is suggested here for each and every separate cultural group. Thus, a Christian missionary is to enter into the new culture, read, listen and study its "messages"—its inner meaning—and discover within the culture how God, sin, grace, Christ, redemption and kingdom are already present (in germ) within that culture.

The task is fourfold. First is the task of discovery. For example, what role does sin play in the imagination, the literature, the rites, the realities of this particular culture? That is to say, how do these people perceive evil (along the lines of Paul Ricoeur's study *The Symbolism of Evil*)? Is it primarily an external ritual uncleanness? Is it unjust economic and social structures (as Liberation Theology is wont to say)? Surely many societies do not find evil in polygamy, concubinage and in many other practices Western Christendom has traditionally classified as immoral. But let the discovery of the sense of sin proceed without prejudice or prejudgment; only then will the sense of grace, redemption and the need of a Savior make sense to the people in that culture.

Along with the discovery of some sense of God, sin, grace, Christ, redemption and kingdom in a particular culture, there is the second task of support and encouragement. The Christian missionary, as we have seen from the documents of Vatican II, does not come on primarily as an exorcist driving out the Devil in a pagan culture. He is to look for and approve what is good and true in that culture. The Word became incarnate thoroughly in Christ and thoroughly in the Semitic-Hebraic culture of the time. To paraphrase Geertz, we should not look for Christ "behind," "under," or "beyond" his culture, but Christ is to be discovered "in" his culture. To believe in the Incarnation in the sense of Blondel and Baum is to believe that the Word of God is incarnate (and redeeming) within all the cultures of the world.

This, then, leads to the third task: that of critique and refinement. In Christian doctrine the Incarnation of Christ and His Redemption is universal in effect, but absolutely unique and singular in cause. Christ is not one avatar among innumerable many as in the Hindu pantheon. Nor can all moral judgments be set aside in some kind of crass relativism. (Berger's extreme example is that of cannibalism.) The constructing of a local *Christian* theology from within the actual living meaningful world of an indigenous culture will have many positive, constructive elements to work with if the first two steps (discovery and approval) have been done well. But the task of critique and refinement must be done with great prudence and skill to bring this local Christian community in line with the larger Christian tradition and within the larger "catholic" Christian community.

The fourth task is the positive building up of the Kingdom within the cultural group. It is here that we see that historically, existentially, there is no pure abstract Christianity. There is only Greek Christianity, Western European Christianity, Italian Catholicism, Irish Catholicism, the Catholicism of Latin America. Syncretism has always been a dirty word in missiology, but in this context the best theory and strategy (adopted by Robert Schreiter in his course at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago) is to admit openly that some form of syncretism has always happened and is always necessary. There is bad and good syncretism. Bad syncretism occurs when Christian teachers (either consciously or unconsciously) try to pretend it does not exist.

To build up a genuine local living Christian community one must do more than construct theoretically a local theology. To avoid shallow accommodation, public rites and liturgies may take on rather radical different forms. That is to say, the mere introduction of African drums and dance in the Roman liturgy may be nothing more than a form of accommodation. In Japan, perhaps, the ceremonial tea service could well serve as the setting for the Eucharist. Among the Aymara in southern Peru there is a long tradition of community reconciliation. This tradition, then, may become the setting for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In the authentic setting of the people's own traditional mode of realizing reconciliation among themselves, they will become aware that the very Son of God is present among them in word and action forgiving them their sins and effecting healing and grace within their community. This would be an example of how Christ must be discovered and built up among an indigenous cultural group.

* * *

The constructing of local theologies is not a tried and tested experiment yet. Its rationale is being developed; its objective is to allow the Kingdom of God to be realized on earth with all the beauty of the diversity of the human family. The movement deserves a hearing, careful support, and, above all, sharp criticism.

JOHN FANDEL

POWDERED SKY

on the path,
robin's crushed egg-
shell, flecks
diminutive as forget-
me-nots a little
further back.

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FEAR VALLEY, U.S.A.

RUSSELL W. GIBBONS

A form of industrial slaughter

On Sunday, September 18, Lynn Pflug left his new home in Columbiania, a small town about 20 miles down the Mahoning River Valley from the Campbell Works of Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company, where he has worked for seven years, to report for the 3 o'clock afternoon shift. Other workers might have avoided the Sunday turn, but Mr. Pflug, a burly, bearded man of about 30, welcomed the chance for the Sunday time and a half to help pay for his new home. He had made only two payments.

A little over a hundred miles to the southeast, Chester H. Ferguson was arriving at the private runway of Pittsburgh International Airport in the Lear jet of the First Financial Corporation of Tampa, Florida. Mr. Ferguson, the chairman of Lykes Brothers Inc., a conglomerate that had extended its shipping line to ranching, meat packing, citrus growing and processing, banking and real estate, was attending a special meeting of the corporation to decide on the future of the Campbell Works of Sheet & Tube.

Eight years ago Lykes bought out Sheet & Tube, the nation's eighth largest steelmaker, in a move that was described as a financial coup on Wall Street, as the steel company was six times larger than the buyer. At the time the Lykes people made an ominous prediction, declaring that "we will not hesitate to use the $100-million Sheet & Tube cash flow for other purposes if our view of the future of steel should change." Those "other purposes" soon became apparent in the Lykes expansion into insurance and electronics and the downturn of its steel acquisition.

The Lykes "view of the future of steel" was soon decided at the six-hour meeting presided over by Ferguson. Sheet & Tube had no case with the conglomerate directors; its 76-year-old plant was a financial loser and the target of costly environmental actions by both the state and the federal government. At the end of the meeting it was decided to shut the Campbell Works down and move operations to more modern mills in Indiana Harbor near Chicago. The next day in Youngstown, the company announced that it was shutting down —and that 5,000 jobs would be wiped out.

Lynn Pflug was incredulous. Only the previous Friday his department foreman said that cutback rumors were without any foundation. "They didn't lay their position on the line," he said. The condolences offered by Jennings Lambeth, president of the Sheet & Tube, at the press conference announcing the shutdown (employees had been told of the decision only 15 minutes earlier than the press) did little to reassure him. Lambeth offered that "I know what it is for these people to pay a mortgage or send kids to college." In 1975 Mr. Lambeth earned $198,514 in salary and cash incentives, not including stock options, from Sheet & Tube.

The impact in Ohio's "Ruhr Valley" was devastating, for people who have been intertwined with the making of steel for almost a century could quickly translate the loss of 5,000 basic jobs in steelmaking to another six or seven thousand in the retail and service industries dependent on mill payrolls. The effect was a form of industrial slaughter. "They don't care about people," said an angry Mayor Mike Katula of Campbell, whose community *was* in effect Sheet & Tube. "All they are looking for is profits. They deal with industries like pieces on a checkerboard. Lykes milked this plant dry and put the profits elsewhere—now they're getting rid of the cow."

Throughout the industrial northeast there were other steel towns in trouble, and the events of August and September led to a White House conference in mid-October that brought an acknowledgment from President Carter that the American steel industry was, indeed, in deep trouble. The industry claims that unfair foreign competition has eaten into the domestic steel market and has enlisted the support of steel communities and the union against the specter of "foreign imports" and in some instances pollution controls. Yet sophisticated steelworkers know the history of the steel giants—U.S. Steel, Bethlehem, Republic and Youngstown Sheet & Tube—and know that they decry government "interference" in pricing and environmental standards, while rushing to seek government assistance when profits are down.

Some see a poorly disguised attempt to gain Lockheed-like subsidies along with higher quotas on imported steel. Others see the demographic map of mill shutdowns and massive layoffs in the late summer affecting a dozen communities in Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio and conclude with open cynicism that 20,000

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jobs have been sacrificed in a deliberate bid by the industry to get government subsidy for an ailing domestic manufacturing sector. Whatever the merit in these accusations—made by several steel analysts—there can be little doubt that the industry is today reaping the whirlwind of decades of post-World War II conservatism and insulation from competition. Charles Bradford, a Merrill Lynch analyst whose report last summer charged that Japanese steel-making was more efficient, says that their bite into the American market is as much because of innovative and aggressive customer marketing as anything. Yet while the import "flood" has grown to an expected 15 percent of the domestic market this year, the price of American-made steel has gone up over 12 percent.

Far-Reaching Consequences

All of this debate about the industry and the reasons for its difficulty has deep social consequences in the heartland of the steel belt. Whole communities are facing a difficult winter with literally thousands of unemployed, who were in the past the central core of the local work force. Towns like Campbell and Lackawanna, N.Y., Conshohocken, Pa. and Johnstown, Pa. face cutbacks in municipal services and even in schools. "People still think that it's a bad dream, that the plant will reopen again," says Campbell Mayor Katula, "but I'm looking ahead to many years of hardship." Younger workers like Lynn Pflug face the dilemma of raising a family with a newly-acquired mortgage, while being laid off at the area's largest source of traditional employment. Middle-aged workers with some seniority are especially hard hit—too old to really find another job, too young to qualify for a pension, and still with mortgage commitments and many times with one or more older children in college.

For many of these families, steeped in two or three generations of steel-making, the closures and shutdowns threaten their very way of life. College may never be realized by the sons and daughters of many of them. Where once there was a begrudging respect for the steel companies, which at least provided the means to achieve a good wage—after several confrontations with the United Steelworkers, a cornerstone of the old Congress of Industrial Organizations that was the instrument for this attainment—today there is only bitterness and anger toward the companies in these towns.

Campbell may become a classic tale of late 20th Century American conglomerate capital in action: Sheet & Tube dictated everything that took place in the town —politics, services, attitudes (it was named after Tom Campbell, a founder of the predecessor company)—and after three generations of steelworkers had helped build the mill and turn over big profits, the ownership sold to a conglomerate hardly concerned that it would drain the mill and then discard it. *Business Week* said of the Lykes experience at Sheet & Tube: "The conglomerateurs' steel acquisitions were seen as cash boxes for corporate growth in other areas."

The mile-long drive from Lake Shore Road where the huge Lackawanna Works of Bethlehem Steel is located, toward Our Lady of Victory Basilica, the ornate marble monument built by Father Baker, is along Ridge Road. The drive is depressing, with the smokestacks dominating the skyline and abandoned stores and buildings broken only by an occasional fraternal hall or tavern which has survived the hard times that had already engulfed Lackawanna when Bethlehem announced in the middle of August that it was terminating 3,500 jobs. That news had seared through the Western New York steel town with the same impact as similar news had been received in Johnstown, Pa.—still reeling from the disastrous flood of only a month earlier—where a 3,800 job cutback was announced with monumental insensivity. "Bethlehem Steel Co. today announced a plan to help improve its profitability," began the lead sentence of the August 19 Bethlehem press statement, which on the third page matter-of-factly observed that 7,000 jobs would be eliminated in both communities.

In the industrial belt outside of Philadelphia, Conshohocken may be the worst of the future for many of these steel towns. Last July the last of 3,000 workers at what was once a prosperous independent steel producer, Alan Wood Steel Co., were laid off. Only a skeleton maintenance and security force patrols the yards of what was the leading employer of the town for decades. "What do you do when you have been making steel all your life?" asks a 50-year-old millwright at Pat's Bar, once a familiar stop for Allan Wood workers, and today facing a questionable future along with dozens of other satellite businesses which were based on a steel mill economy.

The way of life for Campbell, Lackawanna, Johnstown, Conshohocken and other communities is threatened. Centered around the mill, local taverns, ethnic social clubs, union halls and the churches, it has been seen by most planners and sociologists as a secure social base in what had always been considered as a stable basic industry, both symbolizing the strength of industrial America. Now the industry is crying foul, saying that Japanese and German counterparts are doing it in, seeking relief and favoritism from government where before it had always championed the Gospel of Adam Smith as interpreted by Ben Fairless and Charles Schwab.

Old steelmasters like Fairless and Schwab might be appalled at the diversification of their steel business as with its decline, should they be around to see the end result of the classic Executive Suite-type struggle which apparently has seen the financial faction win over the steel men. For not only has a shipping-insurance-

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electronics conglomerate taken over one of the largest firms, but the largest—United States Steel—is now into real estate. In West Mifflin, Pa., U.S. Steel has turned a former slag dump where its mills deposited redhot slag for 60 years into retail gold, building what will be Pennsylvania's largest shopping mall in 1978. U.S. Steel Realty Development, a division of the steelmaker, is the developer. "We will be into plastics in five years," predicts a corporate lawyer.

In a symbolic irony reminiscent of the dominance which the steel trusts enjoyed over virtually every aspect of the lives of those who lived within its shadow at the turn of the century, United States Steel announced last month that this year it was not going to have its elaborate employees Christmas choral group and many-storied Yule tree in front of the 64-story corporate giant that pierces the Pittsburgh skyline. It was a logical extension of the cutbacks which were even being felt, ripple-like, in middle management. But if U.S. Steel had canceled Christmas for the enjoyment of Pittsburgh shoppers, it and its corporate counterparts had promised a bleak Christmas for thousands of their workers and their families—and the uncertainties of economic things to come for many thousands more in 1978.

The White House meeting, held the same day that the President had unleashed his attack on the oil companies, brought only a promise from Carter that "we are going to do something about" enforcement of existing trade laws to curtail foreign steel "dumping." The news was greeted with satisfaction by the directors of Lykes, who saw the possibility of the profit line returning to its retrenched steel operation with such sympathy from Washington. For Lynn Pflug and thousands of others, there still remained only prospects of a bleak winter, closed mills, unemployment assistance that must eventually terminate and the special fear that comes when stable institutions begin to crumble. "This is fear valley," said one of them as he left the Campbell Works for the last time in October.

SOAP, etc.

TELEVISION

Someday—probably not in our lifetime—there will come a new television season that will not be greeted with moans of dismay and editorial hand-wringing. By then, presumably, we will have learned that "the television that could be" never could have been, and that whatever hopes and expectations greeted its invention were illusory, and unequivocally so. Every audience expects itself to be satisfied in entertainment, and as long as television remains a predominantly commercial enterprise (as it will), it can not be much different from what it has become. A corporation can scarcely be expected to profit from symphony concerts, panel discussions and experimental drama; the viewer in Televisionland has, thanks to the rating services, made his own preferences abundantly clear. Let us be thankful, therefore, for whatever crumbs are thrown our way, and who are we, after all, to tell Everyman what he should and should not enjoy? No one expects the publishing business to stop printing its pulps that support its prestige items; why should television be any different? It has, in fact, and in spite of itself, a kind of unconscious genius in its reflection of national taste and trends. It is true that, what we gaze at in horror today may very well have been impossible to show ten, or even five, years ago. The question, of course, is whether this represents progress or regression.

A case in point is *Soap*, which represents, it seems to me, what is generally thought to be progress but is in fact regression. *Soap* is an "adult character comedy series," whatever that may be, on ABC. After years as the poor relation of the commercial networks, ABC has suddenly come to dominate the airways, and may therefore be expected to serve as the weather vane for the programming future. If so, the future is disheartening.

The show has attracted a disproportionate amount of attention because it has been condemned by a number of religious organizations. It is a consecutive series —hence, I suppose, the title—which, in its substance if not subject matter, takes advantage of the new liberties in the treatment of sexuality. That, I think, is being charitable; it may more properly be said to overwhelm them. By devoting itself nearly exclusively to its notion of sex it has, inevitably, been applauded in the usual places, and has about it that air of self-congratulations so characteristic of low-minded pioneers. What is remarkable about *Soap* is that it is unremittingly juvenile, and that this immaturity is considered to be a sign of health.

Far from health, it exudes a kind of sickness, or some malady from which we must instinctively recoil. It is populated by the usual inhabitants of 1970s sitcoms —everyone seems to be in his or her mid-thirties, all of the men have styled hair, everyone over 50 is a fool, the blacks are hip and wise, the women are committed to careers (one, alas inevitably, is a reporter). The plot seems to be a kind of revolving door of ancient burlesque gags. Now that it is permissible to speak the unspeakable, *Soap* more than compensates for years of repression and euphemism. It is a positive orgy of liberated language. Instead of an incidental reference to sex or an occasional allusion, it is the nonsexual content that is slipped in every few minutes to relieve us from the hilarity; so infrequently, in fact,

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that we soon begin to thirst for a single entendre. Surely, one imagines, there is more to life than premature ejaculation, homosexuality, masturbation, etc. etc. What is annoying about *Soap* is not so much that it is salacious, as I imagine some would conclude that it is, but that it is dirty-minded, which is something quite different. The players take a kind of giggly delight in their naughtiness and elbow-in-the-ribs remarks. Like small children, they have gotten hold of something forbidden and, in their perversity, refuse to let go.

This scarcely represents a breakthrough, either for television or society. It is too much to hope that the networks would treat our unbuttoned age with subtlety or discretion—that is not why they are there. The sales instinct, it would seem, is prepared to abuse nearly anything, and just as television news is pleased to stretch the boundaries of taste and judgment in the name of the people's right to know, so comedy will saturate us for the cause of the people's right to snicker.

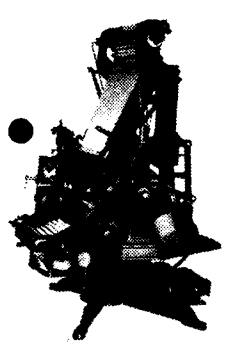
It is remarkable to see people on television swapping homosexual lore and unzipping their trousers with abandon. However, like any saturation of the flesh it soon loses its spark and becomes tired, silly, and embarrassing. *Soap* may very well be the extreme that will carry television to the mean. I think religious objections to it are ill-founded. So long as it survives it is an admirable antidote to the sexual gluttony of our age.

PHILIP TERZIAN

(*Philip Terzian is Assistant Editor of* The New Republic. *This is the first appearance of what will be a regular column.*)

PEACETIME

PRESS



It has crept up on us quietly, without announcing itself. Even now a lot of people have failed to notice the change. There is still plenty of violence in the world, of course; terrorism is often in the morning papers. But in peacetime such things have a muted, puzzling quality.

It has been curiously like the beginning of the war, which arrived by stages. The Pentagon started to count the dead back in 1961, but we did not really feel ourselves at war until three or four years after the first American casualties. You might say the war began with the first American air raids on North Vietnam in August, 1964, after the Tonkin Gulf incident. Or with the beginning of systematic bombing in February, 1965. Or with the landing of a Marine battalion near Da Nang in March, 1965. Or with the onset of independent U.S. military operations in June, 1965. Or with the first of the big troop commitments in July, 1965. At the very latest the war began when several hundred Americans died during a single week in the Ia Drang Valley in November, 1965.

But when did the war end? Did the Christmas bombing of Hanoi in 1972 mark the end of the war? Or was it the return of American troops and POWs early in 1973? Or the end of the bombing in Cambodia in August, 1973? Or the fall of Saigon in April, 1975? Or the Mayaguez incident in May, 1975? The end, whenever it came, was in stages, a kind of military detumescence, its passage clouded by Watergate.

You would think a state of war would be as easy to establish as the date, but it's not. War is a matter of mood more than of violence. People remember the campaigns and battles, but they quickly forget the mood. Two distinguishing characteristics of peacetime, in fact, are the difficulty people find in remembering what war feels like, and their inability to imagine the circumstances which might lead to another. In peacetime we understand the consequences only too well; we are very far from feeling trapped in a corner; we are in a mood to conciliate; if agreements elude us this year, perhaps we will reach them next.

The United States is at peace. A compelling bit of evidence, if evidence is needed, is the very fact that no one much remarks the fact. Peace is implicit on the front pages of the newspapers every morning. This is very much a subjective thing, but the news I read strikes me as faint and uncompelling, as if we were only going through the motions of struggle and conflict. The Bert Lance affair, which dominated reports from Washington for so many months, never quite captured my attention. For the reporters covering the story, and certainly for Carter, Jody Powell, Senators Percy and Ribicoff, and Lance himself, it was no doubt real enough, but to me the story had a certain hollow quality, as if no one quite believed in it.

I don't mean that Lance's overdrafts weren't . . . *disturbing*; nor that the efforts of various officials to forget the whole business weren't . . . *troubling*; nor that Powell's brief exercise of the art of the political knife wasn't even . . . perhaps . . . *alarming*. But these concessions are entirely perfunctory on my part. No matter how much observers protested in print that this was indeed serious, we ought to be paying attention, important principles are at stake, down this road Nixon lies, etc., etc., I never altogether believed them. I felt they were making it up. The Bert Lance affair wasn't really an affair at all; it was something of a charade; people's hearts weren't in it. Or so it seemed to me.

We are at peace. Insofar as politics is a cousin of war pursued by gentler means, we are even politically

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at peace. Carter's troubles with tax reform, the energy bill, the SALT talks, welfare reform, and a Jewish community much alarmed by the prospect of Palestinians at Geneva are intractable no doubt, but they lack the venom of really bruising political battles. I don't mean they are unimportant, nor that the combatants are only half in earnest, but that the conflicts are parochial, arousing fitful general interest at best. A nation at peace is a nation in bits and pieces, which jostle each other in passing. It is like the difference between a mob, and a lunchtime crowd at a busy street corner. Vietnam and Watergate involved everybody all the time, but now it is peacetime and we go our separate ways.

Indeed our mood is so uncombative that we all but ignore the shooting war in Ethiopia, where the Russians and Cubans are heavily engaged in a manner which would have invited our pellmell intervention only a few years ago. Of course the Horn of Africa is a long way off, but so was Vietnam; and it has no great natural resources, but neither did Vietnam. The difference is one of mood. The strategic thinkers in the State Department, the Pentagon, the National Security Council, the Council on Foreign Relations and the ante-rooms of academia all have their arguments ready, but no one seems to want to listen. Access to the Red Sea is at stake, they might say. The Persian Gulf and Indian Oceans are next door. The Russians are gaining a foothold. Similar arguments persuaded Ford and Kissinger to slip more than a toe if not so much as a whole leg into Angola, but things are different now. We are content to let the Russians have a taste of unruly allies and pointless struggle. Mussolini had Ethiopia once, after all, and what did it get him? Trouble, expense and a bad name.

This is the mood of a nation at peace, its fires banked. If the first half of the Seventies was the last act of the Sixties, what defines the present decade's last half? The papers are filled with stories aspiring to five-column headlines—energy, the environment, the cities, the Middle East, Rhodesia and South Africa, terrorism—but they elbow each other inconclusively for space.

Consider the strangeness of the Baader-Meinhof gang. Its history of violence is quite extraordinary. A dozen or more gang members killed four people when they kidnapped the German industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer on September 5. After holding Schleyer for six weeks they murdered him by cutting his throat. A related group of three men and a woman hijacked a Lufthansa plane with 82 passengers on October 13th. On the 16th the terrorists murdered one of the plane's pilots. On the 18th a German commando group stormed the plane and killed three of the terrorists outright, seriously wounding the fourth.

But then the really extraordinary thing happened. Three leaders of the gang, including its co-founder Andreas Baader, committed suicide in Stuttgart only a few hours after the hijacked plane had been stormed in Somalia. A great deal is going to be made of the pistols which two of the suicides used—how did they get into the prison? did the authorities murder them? etc. etc.—but there cannot be much question the suicides were genuine. One of the three hung herself, and a fourth gang member attempted to stab herself to death with a bread knife, but survived. All were following the example of the gang's other co-founder, Urlike Meinhoff, who hung herself in May, 1976.

Up to a point the Baader-Meinhoff gang's history was much like that of other leftist terrorist groups in France, Italy, Japan, Latin America and even the United States during the last decade. All grew out of middle-class student groups, were morally horrified by the materialism and even the prosperity of their societies, rejected the conservatism of the Russian-dominated Communist Party, and turned toward violence from a kind of desperate integrity, not because they thought it would work, but because they felt that defiance—even suicidal defiance—was the only permissible response to a corrupt world.

All of these groups, if not all of their members, have come to varyingly bad ends, but even in that dismal company the Baader-Meinhof gang sets something of a record. Suicide from despair is bad enough, but a mass suicide as a gesture of pure rejection and defiance speaks in a tone of compelling horror.

I do not know how to explain the Baader-Meinhof gang. It is customary in postmortems of this sort to trot out a list of the ills of society—War, Injustice, Racism, Poverty—as if muddled but honest concern were sufficient to explain desperate acts. No doubt social concern played its role in the gang's infancy, when its members were anonymous molecules in a much broader and cooler mass student movement. But there are all sorts of ways to help people without resort to guns and bombs, and a revolutionary effort so obviously doomed to failure from the start requires an additional attempt at explanation. The reasons have something to do with the relation of moral passion, blocked aspiration and anger, but I cannot guess much more than that. The suicides may have had a practical goal of some sort, but they were also an expression of what the gang members felt for each other, and thought of us.

It would be a mistake to dismiss them too quickly as crazy. That their actions do not make sense, does not make them insane. In other circumstances their appeal might have brought a broader response.

But in our present mood of peace this seems hard to believe. The craziest thing about the Baader-Meinhof gang, in fact, is that they directed their appeal to an audience so unlikely to respond. But all the same they hoped to shatter our placidity and bring us into their world, to make us partners in their desperation, to narrow our minds to their singleness, to draw all the bits

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and pieces of society together in a conflict with only two sides, to make their war a general war, and to end the peace.

But this is peacetime and we are in no mood for rallying cries. The Baader-Meinhof gang is only frightening and sad. We have our private concerns but no appetite for general undertakings. Even gentler champions get nowhere. The partisans of the environment, social justice, peace, tax and welfare reform, energy and arms control send out their appeals, but receive only half an ear. We are in no mood for war and struggle. We are content with dull newspapers and private lives. After awhile our mood will change. THOMAS POWERS

DARK THOUGHTS

THE SCREEN

In Wim Wenders's *The American Friend*, as I was saying last time, the atmospheric detail makes the fate of one of the characters seem inevitable. Before Jonathan (Bruno Ganz) has been lured into becoming a hit man for gangsters, certain pictures of trains that figure in the story anticipate the real trains where he will commit his murders. These pictures seem to foreshadow the unlikely turn his life takes, and therefore to imply that that turn was unavoidable. Similarly, some routine settings and incidentals of the plot, little visual asides early in the film, turn ominous in retrospect. The series of escalators Jonathan runs down on the way to visit his doctor in Hamburg, and another escalator he rides up in the airport in Paris, both return to mind when he shoots his first victim on an escalator later. These details seem prescient. They make us feel as if in some eerie way it has been clear all along that Jonathan would commit these crimes.

Yet at the same time such details make everything seem unclear too. They obscure ordinary distinctions between right and wrong, innocence and guilt, on which most of us rely. They render the moral universe in which Jonathan lives murky and indefinite. One reason is that, besides giving an air of inevitability to Jonathan's life, these details suggest similarities between the normal and criminal aspects of that life. The person that fingers Jonathan for a life of crime is a purveyor of art forgeries named Ripley (Dennis Hopper), who is more the hero of the film than Jonathan in a sense. Parallels Wenders creates in Jonathan's life before and after he meets Ripley make it hard for us to see just where Jonathan went wrong.

Consider those escalators, for instance. The first one serves only as an establishing shot to tell us whenever Jonathan, who has leukemia, is going to see his doctor. Yet it is a bizarre, almost disturbing location too—a succession of escalators, in fact, that seem to go down endlessly in this peculiar building where the doctor's office is located. We can't help feeling as if Jonathan is descending into the abyss when we see him here. And in a roundabout away, the initial visit we see to the doctor *is* the beginning of Jonathan's decline and fall. It results from the first overture that the gangsters make to Jonathan, a fake telegram in which an associate of Ripley's plays on Jonathan's fears about his disease. When Jonathan kills his first victim on an escalator, and then turns to run back down it to escape, what was an establishing shot earlier becomes a climactic shot now. An establishing shot is by definition a normative view of reality, but this one has served as the lead-in to a scene in which nothing is normative anymore. The scene at the doctor's and the scene of the murder blend, at least symbolically, in a way that begins to make it hard for us to differentiate one aspect of Jonathan's life from another.

From moments like these the film builds up a correspondence between Jonathan's disease and his criminality. Perhaps more telling, however, is the correspondence which also develops, often from the same moments in the film, between Jonathan and Ripley. The similarity between the painting of a train which we see Ripley with in the opening scene and the picture of a train on a lampshade in Jonathan's apartment suggests even before these two men have met that their lives are somehow linked. As the film's title indicates, Ripley becomes Jonathan's friend; but as Wenders's treatment of the relationship between them indicates, Ripley also becomes more than that. He becomes Jonathan's demon—a *doppelgänger*, a twin brother, an alter-ego, an anti-self.

Indeed, in ways that make it harder and harder for us to decide who is hero and who villain in this film, Jonathan and Ripley exchange personalities. In two brief scenes that bracket the second murder Jonathan commits, we see how this is happening. In the first, the night before the murder, Jonathan lies on his back in bed and points a pistol he's been given at his own face, as if he might, in an idle moment, commit suicide. From such a gesture we see how casually this gentle man has saturated his life with the senseless violence of gangsters. In the second scene, which occurs the night after the murder, Ripley lies on a pool table at his house in the same posture Jonathan assumed in bed and shoots himself in the face with a Polaroid camera, one latent self-image after another falling onto the table around him. While Jonathan, the framemaker and art restorer who always dealt with life as mere images, has now become a murderer, it seems that the criminal Ripley has become an image-studier. Ripley's self-portraits are a gesture of introspection more in keeping

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with Jonathan's nature, we would have thought, than with Ripley's own.

In several scenes there are moments when Ripley exclaims how confused he is about himself, and it is his association with Jonathan that has apparently brought on this identity crisis. For reasons even he cannot understand, he feels so badly about having involved Jonathan with his gangster friends that he suddenly turns up to help on the train where Jonathan is to commit the second murder. The difficulty we have judging the characters in this film stems partly from the fact that Ripley's volunteering as he does here is the only magnanimous action anyone ever takes. He may have gotten Jonathan into this mess in the first place; but the very convolutions he has produced in Jonathan's life so remove us from Ripley's responsibility for it, we find it hard to keep his guilt in mind. At the end of the film the two men have driven to a lonely beach to dispose of three other gangsters they have murdered together, but there Jonathan drives off and leaves Ripley stranded just as suddenly as Ripley showed up to help Jonathan on the train. I think our immediate instinct is to give all our sympathy to Ripley at this moment and feel that Jonathan has betrayed him, even though the plain truth is that Jonathan has only assumed at last those values by which Ripley has been living right along.

The ambiguity that Wenders has created about his two main characters is, like the feeling of doom that hangs over their lives, classic *film noir*. The dark and illimitable atmosphere on the sets in these films always transfers itself to the morality in them as well. By the time the film is over, we can never tell where the line is between exploitation and friendship or respectability and criminality. We are never sure where the characters crossed from the one into the other. In all the films of this genre, including *The American Friend*, the glistening darkness that we see is in truth the dark night of the soul. It is the movies' perfect equivalent for so many of the collective guilts and uncertainties we ourselves have come to feel. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR

CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR THE TRAIL

ELIZABETH MINOT GRAVES

"Wildflowers and the Stories Behind Their Names," by Phyllis S. Burch; illus. by Anne Ophelia Dowden (Scribners)

"The trail leads uphill past farm buildings and bears right through an overgrown field . . . water is found one mile up at a brook crossing. . . . The view from the summing is especially fine."

These words, which never fail to give me a thrill, come from the *Appalachian Mountain Club White Mountain Guide*. Inside, the inscription reads: "From Father, for Christmas." Even though many trails are closed during the winter snows, I can think of no happier gift for Christmas. This little book has stayed with me wherever I have lived and has gone up many a mountain with my children too. The new edition can be found at camping stores or by writing to the A.M.C. in Boston, which puts out trail guides to other New England states as well.

Something I would have loved when young is the *Explorers, Ltd. Source Book* compiled by Explorers, Ltd., edited by Alwyn T. Perrin and published by Harper. ($7.95. All ages.) This is a treat with which to dream through the winter. A combination wilderness encyclopedia and catalog, it gives romantic (to me) and practical information about backpacking, ski and river touring, and all sorts of wilderness adventures and survival. In addition, it has a wealth of shopping tips: where to buy climbing and caving gear, canoes, even dog sleds and parachutes. It lists many trail and walk guides available for all parts of the United States, including suburban areas, as well as books and magazines devoted to every kind of outdoor exploration.

My father, Dr. George R. Minot, taught my sister and me to love and observe nature. He was a professor at the Harvard Medical School, and it was his boyhood love of wildlife and wildflowers, his keen curiosity and meticulous eye, that led him from nature's mysteries to the unraveling of medical mysteries, the discovery of the cure for pernicious anemia and the Nobel Prize. The summer woods and water remained his greatest pleasure, relaxation, his "church." He took my sister and me to hunt for wild Maine orchids and Pitcher Plants, to watch for birds. Our house was filled with books on birds and ferns, mushrooms and flowering plants. As a special treat, we could leaf through a portfolio of valuable Audubon animal prints. Exotic butterflies flew about the library, hatched from cocoons sent by mail from South America.

My father would have enjoyed *Trails to Nature's Mysteries* (Dodd. $6.95. 12-adult.) in which Ross. E. Hutchins

ELIZABETH MINOT GRAVES, *a previous contributor, is a freelance writer and children's book editor.*

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describes his life as a working naturalist-photographer, beginning with his exciting boyhood on a Montana ranch and his trips into the mountains after butterflies and other insects. Ross's enthusiasm for the wild and for his work are infectious, and his over 110 photographs are striking.

A Walk in the Forest by Albert List, Jr. and Ilka List (Crowell. $9.95. 9-15.) is a detailed guide to the woodlands of North America, attractively designed and illustrated with photographs and drawings by the authors. It describes the different layers of a forest from the canopy to the ground cover and soil, and includes animal life. Its straightforward question and answer technique (example: is an Indian Pipe a fungus?) could be teacherish but isn't; it helps one quickly zero in on just the sort of specific information a hiker might want.

If the hiker will only take the time to really look about, there is so much to see. *The Hidden World: Life Under a Rock* (Macmillan. $6.95. 8-12.) by Laurence Pringle, illustrated with many large, clear photos, details the multitude of tiny animals—even plants—hidden under rocks and logs, fascinating ecosystems on both land and water waiting to be discovered.

For those camping in the woods or fields at ngiht, indeed for anyone living in the country, Edward R. Ricciuti's *Sounds of Animals at Night*—frogs and toads, birds, insects, mammals—makes a reassuring and fascinating identification guide and an invitation to become part of the night magic. It is illustrated with handsome photographs. (Harper. $5.95. 8-12.)

Mischievous raccoons are widespread and popular. *Wonders of Raccoons* (Dodd. $5.95. 9-13.) by Wyatt Blassingame, illustrated with endearing photos, pictures their seasonal activities, their cleverness and, alas, their unruliness as pets. This is but one of many fine Dodd "Wonders of . . ." nature titles.

It is never too early to take a child on a nature walk. Little children, so close to the ground, have superior views of toadstools and tiny toads. In their I CAN READ Books for beginning readers 4-8 ($4.95.), Harper & Row has some attractive science books, among them this year's *Look for a Bird*, identification hints by Edith Thacher Hurd and appealing watercolors by Clement Hurd. *Fireflies* by Joanne Ryder describes the lifecycle of this insect, so popular with boys and girls. Three-color illustrations by Don Bolognese enhance the pages.

Breathtaking, full-color, larger-than-life photographic closeups distinguish *The Butterfly Cycle* and *Bees and Honey* by Oxford Scientific Films. (Putnam. Each $5.95.) There are captions for 4-8-year-olds plus a brief but fuller explanation for kids 7-11 in the front.

Flowers were my father's special love and remain mine. *Wildflowers and the Stories Behind Their Names* by Phyllis S. Busch (Scribners. $9.95. All ages.) is an exceptionally lovely book with sensitive paintings and drawings by an outstanding botanical illustrator, Anne Ophelia Dowden. It's easy to guess how Jack in the Pulpit got its name, but what about Quaker Rouge? The vignettes of 50 wildflowers help make this a book to be treasured and referred to through the years.

Ms. Dowden's superb paintings also distinguish *The Golden Circle: A Book of Months* by Hal Borland. (Crowell. $8.95. 10 up.) Although officially published by Crowell's junior books department, the poetic text which captures the essence of each season and the rhythms and renewals of the world of nature will appeal almost more to adults. There are lovely pictures of trout lilies, wild strawberries and veronica, pictures to cherish.

In an attempt to "bring young people books about the earth, its creatures, and man's role among them," the Sierra Club in conjunction with Scribners is developing a group of special books for children. *My Garden Companion: A Complete Guide for Beginners* by *Jamie Jobb* (Scribners. $9.95. 8-14.) and illustrated by Martha Weston is a pleasingly, old-fashioned-looking 350-page volume giving a lot of basic nature facts as well as gardening instructions. There's a plant glossary at the end plus

"The Easy Hockey Book," by Jonah Kalb; illus. by Bill Morrison (Houghton Mifflin)

a list of places from which one can order seeds, even ladybugs! As one who always had a garden as a child, I feel this book could lead to a lifetime of pleasure.

Besides its *Sierra Club Trail Calendar* for 1978 to be hung on a wall—snippets of poetry and stunning color photos of mountains one longs to climb—and the *Sierra Club Wilderness Engagement Calendar*, equally tempting photographs, the Club, as part of its new children's program, has developed *Little Creatures*. (All calendars Sierra/Scribners.) This has big full-color photographs of prairie dogs, sparrow hawks and honey bees etc. plus a wealth of information about wildlife—a detailed entry and a drawing for each day of the year. There's also a 10-page how-to section of nature crafts and hobbies.

One plus of nature books for Christmas is that they are gifts that parents and children can share, and the sharing becomes an extra gift as do the hikes and family outings they lead to. The first fresh hepatica, the last brilliant partridgeberry, a loon diving into a sunset-dappled lake, these are filled with wonder. Nature books can help us "see."

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A SELECTED LIST OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

ELIZABETH MINOT GRAVES

Christmas, Holidays, Religion

Merry Christmas, Harry. Story and Pictures by Mary Chalmers. Harper. $3.95. Waiting for Christmas is especially exciting the year little Harry Cat asks Santa for a baby kitten. A tiny book for tiny hands. 3-7. *A Forest Christmas*. Story and Pictures by Mayling Mack Holm. Harper. $5.95. The forest animals share a wonderful Christmas Eve party at Mrs. Rabbit's house. Exquisite large drawings. 4-8. *The Christmas Grump*. Story and Pictures by Joseph Low. Atheneum. $6.95. A Scrooge-like house mouse and his miracle one happy Christmas. 4-8. *The Holiday Songbook*. Sel. and Ill. by Robert Quackenbush. Music for easy piano and guitar. Lothrop. $9.95. Christmas and 26 other holidays: a treasure trove for family and group songfests. Gay design. All ages.

It's Halloween. By Jack Prelutsky. Ill. by Marilyn Hafner. Greenwillow. $5.95. Sparkling story-poems of Halloween fun and fancy with just the right mixture of eeriness and warmth for 4-8. *Halloween Cookbook*. Written and Ill. by Susan Purdy. Watts. $6.90. Meals, tricks, treats: easy to follow, fun! 9-adult. *Shamrocks, Harps and Shillelaghs: The Story of the St. Patrick's Day Symbols*. By Edna Barth. Ill. by Ursula Arndt. Seabury. $7.95. The story of St. Patrick and the celebration of his day in Ireland and America. Lovingly designed. 8-12.

Noah and the Great Flood. By Warwick Hutton. Atheneum. $7.95. Brief, traditional text and huge, imaginative paintings. 4-9. *Sarah and After. Five Women of the Old Testament*. By Lynne R. Banks. Doubleday. $6.95. A forceful, romantic novel about the founders of the Hebrew nation. 12-18. *Death is Natural*. Text and photos by Laurence Pringle. 4 Winds. $5.95. Sensitive photos and a thoughtful reassuring text describe death in nature, not just an end but the beginning of new life. 7-11. *Meditation for Young People*. By Terry Lash. Lothrop. $5.95. A thoughtful evaluation and how-to-guide. 12-18.

Picture Books

I Like the Library. By Anne Rockwell. Dutton. $6.50. The delights of a Children's Room, including one's own card —a wonderful introduction.

Friends. By Satomi Ichikawa. Parents'. $5.50. Play-filled days as friends share fun and fancy. Delicate, loving paintings.

Don't Spill It Again, James. By Rosemary Wells. Dial. $5.95. Two animal brothers: beguiling pictures and three telling, whimsical tales.

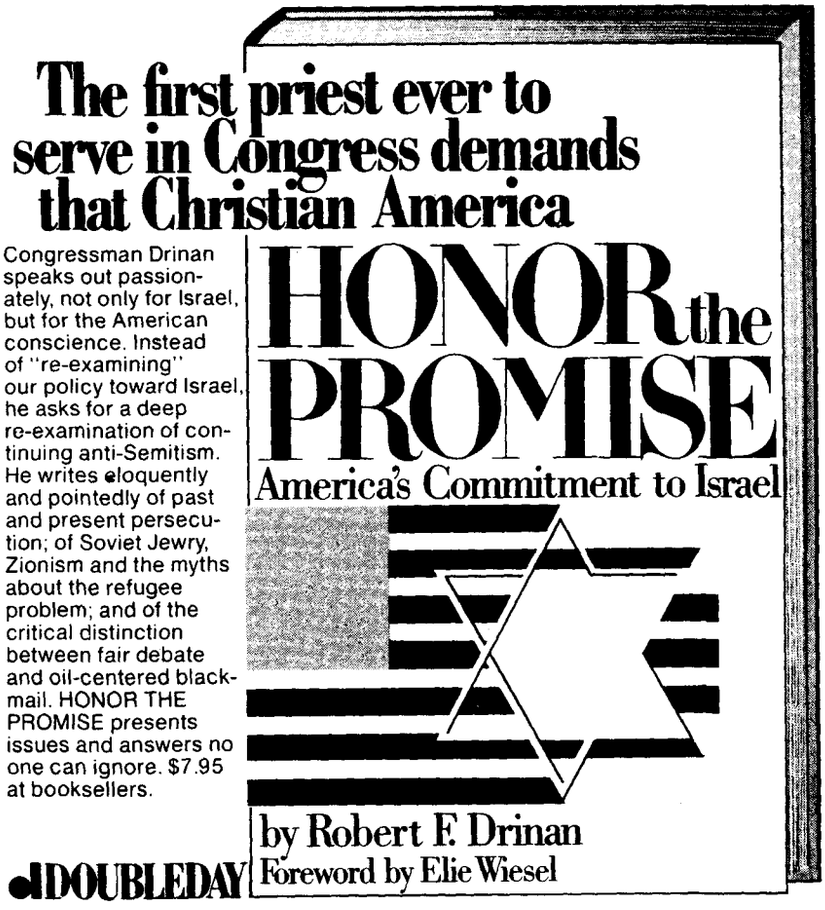
Anno's Counting Book. By Mitsumasa Anno. Crowell. $5.95. Brilliant, imaginative paintings in this highly original farm village counting book.

Burnie's Hill. Pictures by Eric Blegvad. McElderry/Atheneum. $6.95. Beautiful dreamy paintings follow the delights of country life in this old cumulative rhyme.

Benjy's Boat Trip. By Margaret Bloy Graham. Harper. $5.95. Resourceful Benjy stows away on a ship. Great fun!

Wilfred the Rat. By James Stevenson. Greenwillow. $5.95. Homeless Wilfred begins a wonderful new life in an amusement park. Wise and warm.

Your Owl. By Crescent Dragonwagon. Ill. by Ruth Bornstein. Harper. $6.95.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Burglar Bill. By Janet and Allan Ahlberg. Greenwillow. $6.95. Two lovable villains reform each other.

Simple Pictures Are Best. By Nancy Willard. Pictures by Tomie de Paola. Harcourt. $7.95. The foolish shoe-

"Alligator's Toothache," by Diane de Groat (Crown)

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Guess Who My Favorite Person Is. By Byrd Baylor. Pictures by Robert A. Parker. Scribners. $7.95. The beauty of falling stars and friendship. Imaginative text and poetic paintings.

Amifika. By Lucille Clifton. Pictures by Thomas DiGrazia. Dutton. $5.95. A small boy's worries, and joy, when his long-gone father returns from the army. Lilting black rhythms and warm, sensitive drawings.

The Mysterious Tadpole. By Steven Kellogg. Dial. $6.46. Steven's "tadpole" from Scotland grows into a Loch Ness monster! A masterpiece!

Penny-wise, Fun-Foolish. By Judy Delton. Pictures by Giulio Maestro. Crown. $5.95. Silly, miserly Ostrich learns some things are worth paying for. Sparkles with verve and humor.

Come Away from the Water, Shirley. By John Burmingham. Crowell. $6.95. A little girl's madcap adventures with pirates. Whimsical pictures. Also by Burmingham: *The Dog, The Friend, The Blanket.* Tiny books with a few warm, satisfying words. Crowell. Each $3.95.

Miss Nelson Is Missing. By Harry Allard. Pictures by James Marshall. Houghton. $6.95. Hilarious, dead-pan humor in this spirited tale of a naughty class and their teacher who plays witch to reform them.

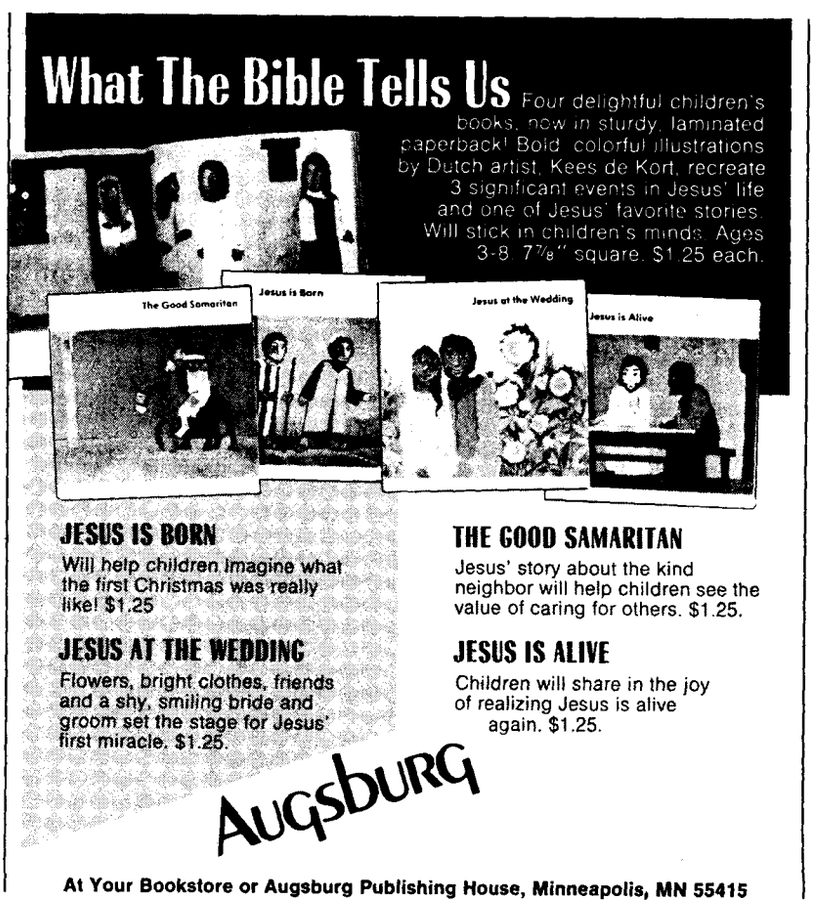
Something Queer at the Library. By Elizabeth Levy. Pictures by Mordecai Gerstein. Delacorte. $5.95. Two girls and their basset hound solve a mini-mystery. Witty and with-it.

Fast-paced, easy, fun stories for kids just beginning to read to themselves, all with exciting design. *Nice New Neighbors.* By Franz Brandenberg. At first, no one will play with the mouse children after they move. *Down in the Boondocks.* By Wilson Gage. Rollicking nonsense. *Bullfrog Builds a House.* By Rosamond Dauer. Poignancy and verve. *Teach Us Amelia Bedelia.* By Peggy Parish. Children's zany heroine stars again! All Greenwillow. Each $5.95. *Hattie Be Quiet, Hattie Be Good.* By Dick Gackenbach. An engaging rabbit. *Mr. Pig and Sonny Too.* By Lillian Hoban. Funny, lazy Mr. Pig meets his match. *Hester the Jester.* By Ben Schecter. A clever girl becomes king. All Harper. Each $4.95. *Forecast.* By Malcolm Hall. Caroline Porcupine and her daring weather forecasts. Coward. $4.69. *Harry and Shellburt.* By Dorothy Van Woerkom. A witty, new hare and tortoise fable. Macmillan. $6.95.

Stories For Ages 7-10

Stop That Bus! By Pat Hutchins. Ill. by Laurence Hutchins. Greenwillow. $6.95. An absent-minded teacher and her clever pupils heroically capture two robbers! An absurd chase!

Mrs. Piggery Snout. By Rosamond Dauer. Ill. by Ib Ohlsson. Harper. $5.95. Liberated mothers and children alike will revel in Mrs. Pig's unique solution to her family's housekeeping.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Ramona and her Father. By Beverly Cleary. Ill. by Alan Tegereen. Morrow. $6.50. Ramona plots to find her father a new job. A warm, funny family story.

Ferris Wheel. By Mary Stolz. Harper. $6.95. When Kate's best friend moves from Vermont, Kate has to begin to grow up, and accept change.

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes. By Eleanor Coerr. Ill. by Ronald Himler. Putnam. $6.95. Deeply moving, true story of a courageous Hiroshima girl fighting bomb-caused leukemia.

Fairy, Folk Tales, & Legends

Puss in Boots. By Nicola Bayley. Greenwillow. $6.95. A magnificent, imaginative pop-up version. 4-8.

It Could Always Be Worse. Retold and Ill. by Margot Zemach. Farrar. $7.95. One foolish calamity after another as a peasant family finds happiness in an unexpected manner. Large, witty watercolors. 4-8.

Who's in Rabbit's House? Pictures by Leo and Diane Dillon. Dial. $7.95. Stunning, huge paintings distinguish this wry African tale. 4-8.

Tailypo: A Ghost Story. By Joanna Galdone. Ill. by Paul Galdone. Seabury. $7.50. A spine-chilling ghost story laid in a hunter's cabin in the backwoods. Rollicking paintings. 4-8.

The Sleeping Beauty. Retold and Ill. by Trina Schart Hyman. Little. $7.95. Rich, romantic paintings. A treat for 5-9.

The Donkey Prince. Retold and Ill. by M. Jean Craig. Ill. by Barbara Cooney. Doubleday. $6.95. A wicked Wizard changes a prince into a donkey but a princess's love breaks the spell. 6-10.

Encounters with the Invisible World: Being Ten Tales of Ghosts, Witches, & the Devil Himself in New England. Retold and Ill. by Marilynne Roach. Crowell. $6.95. A fascinating period piece filled with thrills. Nice design. 10-18.

Fiction For Ages 9-12

Silver on the Tree. By Susan Cooper. McElderry/Atheneum. $7.95. The final and triumphant volume in Ms. Cooper's distinguished saga of young Will's battles against the powers of the Dark. Laid in Wales, this is tapestried with Arthurian legends.

The Game on Thacher's Island. By T. Degens. Viking. $6.95. Longing to be one of the gang leads Harry into harrowing adventure. A discerning seaside tale.

The Devil Hole. By Eleanor Spence. Lothrop. $6.50. Love of music helps Doug cope with the heartache of caring for a handicapped brother.

Alan and the Animal Kingdom. By Isabelle Holland. Lippincott. $6.95. An orphaned boy runs away and tries to make a home for himself and his beloved animals. A discerning story of the need for trust and love. Humor too.

A Summer to Die. By Lois Lowery. Ill. by Jenni Oliver. Houghton. $6.95. A beautifully written, deeply moving first novel about a girl's difficult summer when her sister is dying of leukemia.

In Summertime It's Tuffy. By Judy Angell. Bradbury. $6.95. Girls who've been to camp will revel in 11-year-old Tuffy's escapades and self-discoveries.

Fly into Danger. By Joan Phipson. McElderry/Atheneum. $6.95. A girl outwits some determined parrot smugglers on a plane. Thrills—plus conservation!

And This Is Laura. By Ellen Conford. Little. $5.95. Laura discovers she has a gift for seeing into the future. Hilarious school scenes.

The Pinballs. By Betsy Byars. Harper. $5.95. Wry, upbeat story of 3 kids in a foster home who decide they can

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do something with their lives after all. Subject of a TV special.

Loosen Your Ears. $7.95. *Settle Your Fidgets.* $6.95. By Carol Farley. Ill. by Mila Lazarevich. Both Atheneum. Two delightfully funny, old-fashioned sets of stories about the adventures of a large, crazy farm family.

Give Dad My Best. By James L. Collier. 4 Winds. $6.95. Jack gets a job at the boat club to try and hold the family together.

Foster Child. By Marion D. Dauer. Seabury. $6.95. "Sometimes you can't go back" Rennie discovers in this tough, sensitive story of tragedy—and friendship.

Child of the Owl. By Laurence Yep. Harper. $5.95. A Chinese-American girl in San Francisco gaining an understanding of her heritage and of herself. A moving and distinguished novel.

Hanging Out with Cici. By Francine Pascal. Viking. $6.95. Always in

"Merry Christmas, Harry," by Mary Chalmers (Harper & Row)

trouble both at home and school, Francine suddenly finds herself back in the 40's, her teenage mother's new friend. Their hilarious adventures together carry forward into the future for new understanding and maturity. Highly original, huge fun!

Teenage Novels

Into the Road. By Adrienne Richard. Atlantic-Little. $6.95. The world of motorcycles becomes Nat's world as he finds freedom and his own road.

Leave Well Enough Alone. By Rosemary Wells. Dial. $7.95. Provocative, witty novel about the fine line between right and wrong as babysitter Maureen pokes her way into a dangerous secret during a summer babysitting.

Good Stones. By Anne Merrick Epstein. Houghton. $6.95. An unusual survival story, as half-white Sisul escapes to the New Hampshire mountains to regain her Indian heritage.

My Darling Villain. By Lynne R. Banks. Harper. $6.95. Two families of differing lifestyles—a stormy romance filled with conflict and conviction. A finely crafted novel of substance.

The Solid Gold Kid. By Norma and Harry Fox. Delacorte. $6.95. Six-horror-filled days as a millionaire's son and 4 of his classmates are kidnapped.

Trial Valley. By Vera and Bill Gleaver. Lippincott. $7.95. A self-reliant Appalachian girl and the call of life beyond the mountains. Romance too.

Are You in the House Alone? By Richard Peck. Viking. $6.95. A skilfully handled, biting indictment of rape and hypocrisy in a suburban school community.

One Fat Summer. By Robert Lipsyte. Harper. $5.95. 200-pound Bobby Marks sweats through a summer of hard work, terror and exhilaration, as he finds a job, a new figure and maturity.

The Cage. By Roy Brown. Seabury. $6.95. Some baffled young men awake in a strange underground prison. A provocative novel about mind control and the resiliency of the human spirit.

Ludell and Willie. By Brenda Wilkinson. Harper. $5.95. A moving story of two steadfast high school sweethearts and of impatience—and devotion—between old and young.

Winning. By Robin Brancato. Knopf. $7.95. A high school boy, paralyzed after a freak football accident and his recently widowed English teacher help each other win their way back to life.

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Compiled under the direction of Executive Editor Carlton R. Young, the Editorial Board endeavored to put together a book that would enable more experimental forms of worship through music.

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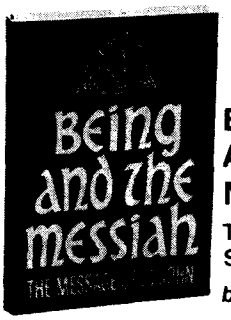

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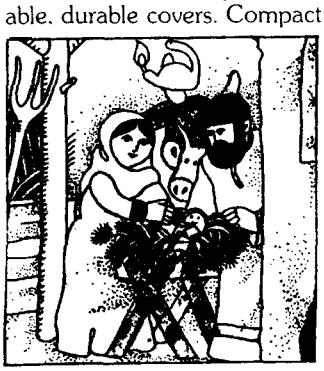

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CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 707*)

make them sign a pledge saying they will NOT write about each other ever again and

2. make Getlein read Peter Hoffman's *The History of German Resistance 1933-1945*. Test him on his reading and ask him if he still hates Germans. If he answers in the positive, send him to the blackboard to write 1,000 times: "I will not hate groups of people—not even Germans." That might do the trick!

Lots of luck!

RICHARD POWERS

Unfilled Needs

Wausau, Wisc.

To the Editors: As Thomas Powers's Aug. 19 blackout article pointed out, the fact that social service programs have had little effect on the level of crime in the urban area indicates that the problem is more complex than merely filling such needs as food and shelter.

Although sociobiologists seem to have missed the point, their major contribution is the recognition that we have both self-oriented genetic traits and other-oriented genetic traits, both of which function to insure survival of the DNR gene material, one through survival of the individual and the other through survival of the group. This has left us with an inner conflict between the biological motivating forces of self and other. The need to resolve this conflict does not influence behavior in other species because they lack the consciousness to be aware of inner conflict between these forces; the freedom to control or repress one and respond to the other; and the intelligence to understand their choice.

Without trust, self-confidence, and self-worth, however, we are too insecure and self-concern is too compelling to overcome. If it becomes the dominant motivating force in a large enough segment of a society, the social contract breaks down as discussed in Peter Steinfels's Aug. 19 article on the blackout.

This happens when a society fails to help a substantial number of its members fill their basic physical and intellectual needs in a way that also fills the psychological need for trust and self-esteem. In our society, the failure to effectively fill these needs has spawned a cult of individualism that has resulted in a cultural intensification of self-concern without regard for others that has further eroded the social contract by undermining the mutuality of concern that is the fabric of a cooperating society.

The fact that 45% of the looters were employed and that this figure is not too different for the "'normal" crimes of the same areas (*Christian Science Monitor*, 8/15/77), indicates that not only unemployment and poverty but also the cultural emphasis upon "doing your own thing" play a part in the criminal activity in our society.

Changing attitudes and motivations and restoring trust, self-confidence, and self-worth in adults is often difficult, and at times, impossible. Even well-designed social service programs that effectively preserve these essential feelings will have only limited success. Our high crime rate is likely to continue until we learn how to prevent these feelings from being eroded and prevent self-concern from becoming dominant in the young.

MARILYN KRAMER

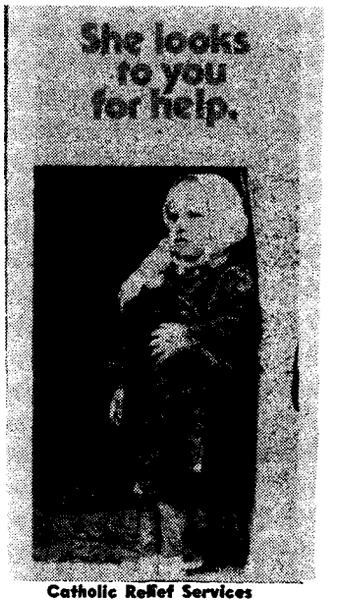
Checks & Balances

Charlottesville, Va.

To the Editors: If reader Manetta Calkins [Sept. 16] wants information on the salaries of the radical left, I suggest she ask Mr. Nixon, his plumbers, the FBI, the IRS and a dozen other government agencies. Jane Fonda, Bill Kunstler and others involved in movements for social change have found their financial records and private lives investigated and subsequently publicized and distorted or even fabricated in the past decade. Sadly, many of those most harmed by such illegal tactics did not have the resources and influence to successfully fight back.

CHARLES P. FINN

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.



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Viewpoint

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